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Cumming's Minor Works.

INFANT SALVATION.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT.

THE COMMUNION TABLE.

BY

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PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.

1855.

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TO
LADY VERNEY, OF CLAYDON,
BY WHOM THE SORROWS AND THE CONSOLATIONS
UNFOLDED IN THIS LITTLE WORK
HAVE BEEN DEEPLY FELT, AND PRACTICALLY EXEMPLIFIED,
THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT
AT REMOVING SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT TROUBLE
THE SPIRITS OF BEREAVED PARENTS,
IS DEDICATED,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF UNFEIGNED RESPECT AND ESTEEM,
BY THE AUTHOR.

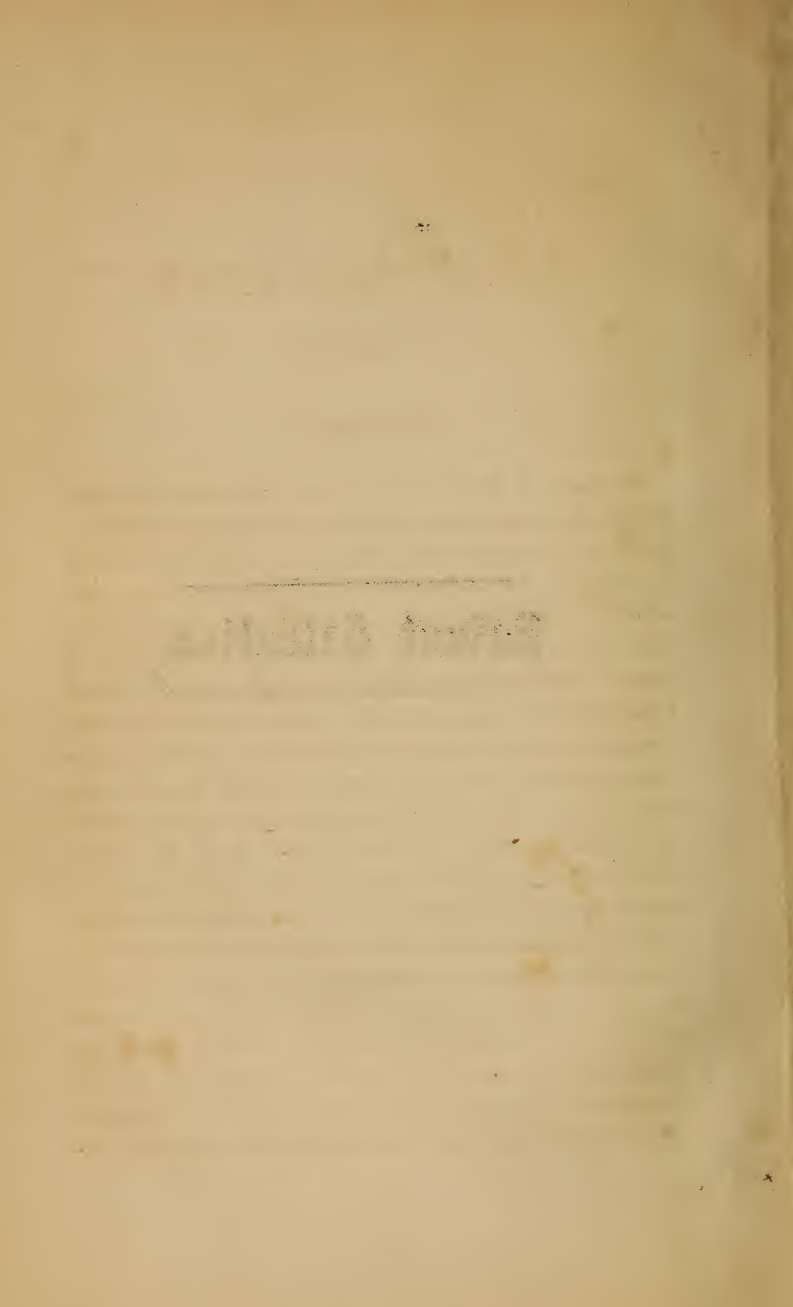


P R E F A C E.

THE author wrote this little work originally for himself. Its thoughts interested and instructed his own mind, and he indulged the hope they would not fail to interest the minds of others also.

It is his belief that they have done so; the best evidence is, perhaps, the rapid sale of a very large impression, combined with many requests to republish it. He has doubled its size, strengthened its positions, and appended such practical spiritual truths as he thinks will leave a favourable impression on the hearts of those who weep over the remembrance of their departed infants. Where they are he would teach them to know, and the way also, and, if possible, to hear their voices from heaven saying, "Come up hither: we are happy. Come in heart, in faith, in hope now, and in due time in person also."

Infant Salvation.



INFANT SALVATION.



CHAPTER I.

IF it be a fact, as the most accurate statistics prove, that at least a third, or not improbably a half, of the human race die in the years of infancy, it must be a question of some interest to all, and of the deepest anxiety to many—what conclusions we may scripturally cherish respecting their eternal state. Reckless and painful assertions have been hazarded by some, doubts have been freely expressed by others, and an anxious desire for a clear and satisfying decision has been felt by all. As our infants die, we feel our anxieties about their hereafter multiply. Tender hearts hope the best; and the aching void created in maternal bosoms is eased by the expectation, of which affection rather than evidence is the source, that one day the bud that was nipped on earth shall be seen in heaven in all the bloom of immortality and glory. All we would attempt in this little work, is to show that these hopes of the heart are sustained by the words of inspiration beyond all cavil or dispute. We assert, therefore, there are solid grounds for

bright hopes of the future destiny of infants: we are not left, we think, to conjecture; the grave that shrouds them from our sight does not displace them from our surest anticipations. Death severs the parent and the infant only for a season. We are sure that this is not the fond wish of a bereaved spirit, but the clear assertion of the Spirit of God.

It is worthy of remark, that infants are referred to in Scripture as peculiarly the protégées of the love of Jesus. The blessed gospel opens an asylum in its bosom to infants. It alone is the nursing-mother of the young. Atheism would treat them with the same freezing apathy wherewith it frowns on the whole family of man. Deism, or infidelity, whether it speaks through the socialist or mere phrenologist, views them as specimens simply of physical organization, and fears to teach a holy lesson, lest there should be communicated what either regards as an unjust and injurious bias. Ancient nations did not hesitate to offer their little ones either as propitiations for the sins of their parents, or as sacrifices to Moloch. Even the Romans, the *domini rerum*, in whose language strangers were known by the name of Barbarians only, were generally accustomed "to expose" their infants. The Chinese are notorious infanticides. Hindooism, dead to maternal instinct, forgets the infant she brings forth, and leaves it to perish in the waters, or on the banks of the Ganges. We require no evidence more significant of the cruelty of superstition than

the accounts furnished by Gutzlaff and other missionaries of the treatment experienced by infants, especially female infants, in China. Numbers are to be seen daily perishing of hunger in the streets of Pekin; and when the missionary of the cross remonstrated with those who had power to interpose, the only reply he received was, "It is only a female." Christianity alone looks with sympathy on infants, loves them more than angels, provides for their future state, and plants in the sorrowing hearts of those who have lost them bright hopes of restored union and communion in glory. Christianity takes the infant close to her mother-bosom, spreads over it the warm wing of love, sprinkles on its bright brow waters from that river whose streams make glad the city of our God, and gives utterance to the deep sympathies of her heart in these words, — "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Babes are not too insignificant in her thoughts. Her Incarnate One controls the exalted hierarch beside the throne, and also stoops to teach and bless an orphan child. Never did He who spake as man never spoke breathe a more beautiful or touching thought, or bequeath to mourning mothers bereaved of their infants a more precious legacy, than when he rebuked the stern frowns which his disciples cast on the mothers that crowded round him with their babes, and took up the unconscious infants in his arms, and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me,

and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Whosoever may undervalue these germs of immortality — these folded buds of promise — these tenants of earth in training for heaven — the Son of God does not. He spreads over them the shield of his power, and covers them with the feathers of his wing. He saw immortality beam from their countenances — in their bosoms his ear heard the beatings of a life that can never die — and capacities which all the treasures of time and earth cannot fill disclosed themselves to the eye of Him to whom the most secret structure of mind and body is thoroughly unveiled. It is relation to eternity that makes the feeblest strong, and the smallest great. In that scene the Son of God let forth bright beams of his essential glory ; not the glory which the crowd admires, it is true, but that glory which, as its Hebrew synonyme denotes, is "weight when weighed" in those scales wherein human glory is as dust in the balances. True greatness is not necessarily associated with armed battalions, and floating banners, and rolling drums, and laurels and garments rolled in blood, and victories. These in the estimate of higher spirits are childish things in one respect, and demon things in another respect. There is little real glory about war. It is, after all, a little game, even when greatest admired by little men. Real glory is spiritual, not material. Its centre is the soul, and its circumference the universe. Spiritual conflict crowned with spiritual triumphs—souls bursting the chains of sin—hearts

dissolving in sympathies, in sacrifices, and in deeds of lofty disinterestedness — these are the elements of that glory which is not little, and does not die. In the Saviour's embracing infants, the great mass of mankind can see none of the elements of a sublime thing. Physical and earthly glory alone can they applaud, they can see tinsel only; yet it was a sublime spectacle. The Son of God, in this act, and in expressing the sentiment in which it was set, was really radiant with the greatest glory, just because he was clothed with the greatest humility: the humble alone unbosoms the lofty, and greatness seems greatest when it stoops. In embracing these babes, God shone forth in richer majesty than when He stood on the circle of the heavens and said, "Let there be light: and there was light." God was glorious in the garments of humanity, for as he descended in suffering, humiliation, and sorrow, he really rose in true majesty, and shed upon the paths he moved in an intenser lustre. God's acts of condescension are God's acts of greatness. Hence it is that the microscope gives us a clearer view of his power, and wisdom, and beneficence, than even the telescope. He is thereby seen to be more wonderful in giving its pulsations to an insect's heart, and in weaving the texture of the ephemera's wing, than in fixing stars in their spheres, or wheeling planets in their orbits. The gospel is the microscope and telescope combined, and both consecrated to loftier fields of vision. It records the discoveries of both. Our blessed Lord

then was really more glorified when he gathered the poor, barefooted, and ragged infants around him in the streets of Jerusalem, and blessed them, than when the cherubim gathered round Him on the throne of his glory, "high and lifted up," saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts." Humility, we have said, is greatness. May we feel it to be so! Let us pray to have a portion of the same spirit, that we may be able to rise above the "vain show" of things, and pierce and calculate their substance. Let us look on all that attracts the vulgar eye as common and poor; but that soul which can commune with God—which can collect in its capacious bosom the moral splendours of heaven—which can find repose nowhere but beside the throne of God—nutriment nowhere but in the trust, and love, and presence of Deity—let us reverence. We may condemn it, we may pity it; but we dare not scorn it. Its very wreck has still sounding in its depths the voice of God, and its remotest and most guilty aberration from its only centre does not make it part with every trace of its aboriginal grandeur. Be it in an infant's, or in a monarch's bosom, it is too great to be overlooked—too awful to be despised.

CHAPTER II.

IT is a fact, as we have already observed, that nearly half the human race die in the period of infancy and childhood:—whatever may be the causes or the explanation, the fact is beyond dispute. To parents, whose years are counted by these mournful landmarks—blossoms no sooner blown than blasted—tears shed over the infant's bier, that quenched the joys which lighted up the hour of its birth—it must, we repeat, be a very frequent as well as anxious inquiry, What is the final destiny of so large a proportion of the human family? Can we satisfy it? Each infant visitant seems to have descended from the better land, to have breathed our freezing atmosphere a few weeks, and to have opened its eyes on our dismantled world, and immediately to have left us, as if disappointed. Whither did it flee? Where is it now? in weal or woe? Does it cease to be, or only to suffer? Is it well for eternity with the infant throng, taken from successive millions of weeping mothers—from Rachels without number, sorrowing because they are not? Was it mercy or vengeance that wafted them away? Was it God that set the seal of special favour on their infant souls, and repented, and recalled them to more

genial climes? or was it the grim King of Terrors who breathed upon them in his wrath, and numbered them with his victims? Or are they forgotten and forsaken things? Is this possible? Are sparrows counted and infants overlooked? Are ravens heard when they cry for food, and innocents only forgotten?

Various theories, or rather imaginations, have been propagated on this subject. Some have ventured to affirm, that infants dying are annihilated. This is alike unscriptural and unphilosophical. Neither on the page of revelation nor on the page of nature is any such word inscribed. Nothing even in the material world is annihilated. Matter changes its form and structure; but it neither is, nor, as far as our experience goes, can be annihilated. Such a doom revolts the best instincts of our nature, contradicts the clearest intimations of Holy Scripture, and would be utterly inexplicable on any just theory of the existence of a wise and benevolent God. We do not stop to discuss it. We treat it with unmingled contempt. But if it be true, as revelation fully reveals, and as we have intimated before, that in the feeblest frame there resides a soul indestructible as the God that gave it, then the very idea of extinction is as absurd as it is contemptible. The mighty mind of Newton, that recorded the soundings of the firmament, and grasped celestial systems, and grouped the stars, and unveiled the mysterious ties that bind them into universal harmony, was once circumscribed by

an infant's frame. The soul of Milton, the grandeur of whose genius was equalled only by the awful conceptions of which it was prolific, or the sublime and terrible theme which he handled, was once a baby's soul, composed to rest by a mother's lullaby, and amused with toys. Was that mighty spirit that disclosed the primal springs of the motion and harmony of creation, and approached nearest of men to the very throne of wisdom and goodness, capable of destruction in infancy? Was the mind that trod the burning floors of hell, or rose on all but unearthly pinions and mapped the realms of unutterable glory, a thing to be crushed by accident, and to be extinguished by death? The death of either in infancy would not have been the annihilation, but the enfranchisement of those master-spirits, with the full knowledge and unchecked freedom after which they panted, from their prison-houses upon earth. The soul is a fragment of immortality—half time, half eternity is in its nature—its birth indicating its affinity to the former, its incapability of death stamping its relationship to the latter. It asks of the body room only for its expansion—a lodging only for its minority. It asks nothing more.

A second notion is, that the infants of believers only are saved, and those of unbelievers lost. We do not mean to deny that distinctive promises are made to the infants of believers. And these are too precious to be undervalued. It is a holy privilege to be born of Christian parents, as well as a

gracious title to federal blessings; and many will thank God for it in eternity. But there is no evidence in scripture that *eternal* death is ever visited on the souls of children as the punishment of the sins of their parents; the idea involves injustice. "Visiting the sins of the fathers on the children" is exhausted in time, and perhaps it relates not so much to children, that is, infants, in natural succession, as to kings and their subjects. "Fathers" and "children" are expressions repeatedly applied in scripture to rulers and subjects, and to previous and succeeding generations. But if these words be construed in their literal sense, they are intended to convey a lesson and warning to the parents; and therefore the "visiting" of the children must be in this life, that the parents who have neglected their duty may thus see and feel it either as a penalty or a chastisement. Of this, however, we are absolutely certain, that those children only that deliberately transfer to themselves the unholy example of their parents alone shall be punished, while those who deplore and avoid the evil precedent they have witnessed shall not be visited.

Ezek. xviii. 19: "Ye say, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be

upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Ezek. xviii. 2, 4: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

These passages of Scripture set at rest all disputes upon this point. I do not believe that one soul will be saved by its parent's virtue, or that one will perish eternally by reason of a parent's sins. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

A third opinion has obtained some popularity, especially in certain quarters, viz., that all baptized infants are saved, and all unbaptized infants lost. However plausible this may appear, it is not true. We must never magnify even a Christian rite or even a sacrament at the expense of precious truth. No doubt, as I think, it is the sacred duty of every Christian parent to have his child baptized; and few, I presume, unless from inexcusable and guilty neglect, or from prejudices of early growth and inveterate power, will allow their children to grow up unbaptized. But, surely, to visit throughout the cycles of endless hell the error or the crime of the father on the unoffending offspring, is a retribution from which nature strongly recoils, and

to which revelation, I am persuaded, gives no countenance. If baptism were a new heart in every case, and the absence of it the absence of a new nature also, then might this position, severe and awful as it seems, be held with some degree of justice. To have their infants baptized would, in such a case, be the supreme and paramount duty of parents to their offspring. But baptism is not necessarily a new nature.* Neither does nature assert it, nor does experience prove it. The very reverse is capable of proof. While the Holy Scriptures enjoin the administration of baptism as a solemn seal and sign of the covenant of grace, and a channel of unnumbered blessings to them that by faith receive it, they at the same time teach us, with a reiteration and earnestness not to be mistaken, that it is not necessarily a new nature—that “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,” and this change is the personal work of the Holy Spirit—that Abraham received the blessedness of pardon and purity, which are the constituent elements of the new creature, not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. These illustrations are fatal to this theory. It is too obvious from the whole tone of scripture warning, that the great difficulty lies in raising man’s soul above the visible and material symbols to the inward and spiritual truths to which they were intended to point. Now if, under a dispen-

* See “Baptismal Font,” in which this is discussed.

sation where the symbol and the substance were throughout so intimately wedded that they were not to be severed, grace nevertheless in one instance preceded its appropriate rite, and if that instance be referred to by the sacred penman not as a beacon, but clearly as a precedent for the establishment of a principle — surely, under the more unfettered and expansive dispensation of the gospel, the outward rite may be regarded neither as so essential that there is no salvation without it, nor so efficacious that in every instance it operates a transference from sin to holiness, or from the power of Satan to the kingdom of God. The Confession of Faith in the Church of Scotland has these words, “Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth.” The expression, “elect,” is, in my judgment, co-extensive with “all dying in infancy.” I believe none but “elect” infants die in infancy. The wording is rigid, as was characteristic of the divines that drew it up; but the spirit and design were, no doubt, truly Christian.

I do not enter upon other theories. I proceed rather to vindicate and prove what seems to me to be the verdict of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures; viz., that ALL CHILDREN DYING IN INFANCY, OR BEFORE THE YEARS OF RESPONSIBILITY, ARE, WITHOUT ONE EXCEPTION OR LIMITATION AS TO THE CHARACTER OR THE CONDUCT OF THE PARENTS, SAVED.

CHAPTER III.

THE announcement of the proposition in the last chapter will call up objections. It may be well to review some of these objections, and dismiss them before we attempt to prove our proposition and press it. Our way will thus be clearer, and our conclusions less modified or entangled by imaginary difficulties.

It has been objected, for instance, that incontrovertible facts prove that children have been and are involved in the punishment that has been executed on their parents. At the flood, for instance, when the world was destroyed, it is an undoubted fact that millions of infants must have perished in its waters. In the judgment that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah, many infants must have been consumed in the fires. "Hence," says the objector, reasoning from these as analogies, "as we see that infants do suffer because of their parents' transgressions in time, we cannot but consistently infer, or at least you cannot disprove, that infants will suffer for their parents' transgressions in eternity." We admit the fact, but we dispute the analogy. There is no proportion whatever between suffering temporally and suffering eternally. These states of suffering also differ not only in *degree* but also

in *character*; and because the one takes place for one end, it is no fair or legitimate inference that the other must take place also for a totally different end. Such visitations, however outwardly severe, in time may be essential though disguised goodness; in eternity they could be wrath only. If it be true, though I do not wish to anticipate conclusions, as we have asserted, and shall endeavour to prove, that all infants dying in infancy are saved, then the destruction of the infants of the antediluvian world was not wrath, but mercy; not cruelty, but kindness. It was "light affliction for a moment, working out a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory;" for the wave that overwhelmed the casket bore the jewel upon its bosom to the presence of the Redeemer. It was shortening their pilgrimage in time. It was the translation of their spirits from a world dismantled by the flood, over which they would have looked and wept and wandered many-yearred and miserable pilgrims, to a world where there are —

"No griefs to feel, no fears to beat away;
The past unsigh'd for, and the present sure."

It was really harvest treading on the skirts of spring, the reward of grace without wages, and glory anticipating grace.

It has been asserted, that if the doctrine I have laid down be true, it must necessarily imply that there is no such doctrine as election; for if scripture reveals such a doctrine, we cannot but presume

that some of half the human race who die in infancy are elect, and that others of the same class are non-elect. We reply, that whatever be the meaning or the truth of the doctrine of election, it has very little, as far as I can see, to do with this question. If it has, as the Confession of Faith seems to indicate, we may fairly confirm our doctrine by it, and maintain what I have already intimated, that all children who die in infancy are *elect* children; that they are not the punished and proscribed, but the peculiar favourites of God—the predestined subjects of glory, to whom He has manifested, without works and without merit, the riches of his grace, remitting the largest proportion of even the temporal consequences of the primeval curse, and receiving them to the enjoyment of the blessing ere they have even known what it is to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, or to labour for the better bread. In their case election may have its richest illustration, and sovereignty its sublimest victory. Thus the doctrine of election, from which many recoil, may have one aspect at least which every one must hail; and what is denounced by some as a doctrine wrapped in terror and fraught with wrath may, after all, be one of mercy and goodness. I believe that it is so. It is in all cases love in its irresistible power, laying hold of the resisting sinner, and transforming him by its power, and leaving him not till it lifts him to glory. It is simply grace. And admit that God's love must visit us before our love can respond to

and rest on him, and you admit all that is essential in the doctrine of election.

It has been also objected, that the number of the saved is represented in scripture always as small in comparison with the number of the lost. For instance, it is declared: "Many are called, but few are chosen." Matt. vii. 13: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." It is therefore argued, that the fact of so great a proportion of the human race being eventually saved, is, if true, incompatible with these and similar statements. But the text referred to, it will be easily seen, is applicable exclusively to adults, and by no possible stretch of language can it be applied to infants. Infants cannot be "called," because they are incapable of listening or yielding obedience to a call; they are therefore incapable of rejecting it. Adults only can accept or refuse; they alone are the "called," and of them, it is true, painfully true, the "few are chosen." It is a truth as painful to the heart as it is palpable to the eye, that of the adults the great majority live far from God, "strangers to the covenant of promise." If we take the case of London, for instance, the metropolis of the world, we shall find that perhaps 600,000, or probably nearer a million, out of its two millions, never enter a place of worship at all:

and of those who do enter places of worship, how few are there whose hearts are really savingly touched, whose souls are truly renewed, who have felt the gospel not merely in its letter, but in its spirit,—not only as a word, but as the wisdom and power of God! All this one feels most deeply; but we must not forget, that, whilst scripture and statistics too represent the number of adults that now reject the gospel as still many, the same scripture represents the sum total of the saved by the gospel, at the close of this present dispensation, as very numerous. Its language is that of “a multitude no man can number.” It was promised, that Abraham’s seed (that is, Christians) should be “like the stars of heaven for multitude;” that they should be upon the earth as the dew-drops of the morning; that they should be like the sands upon the sea-shore. And, therefore, while it may seem true that a majority of adults are lost in the present day, and under the present dispensation, it is still not true, and there is no reason for thinking it true, (and this is a delightful fact,) that the majority of the human race as a whole, will be ultimately and finally lost. If half the human race die in infancy, and if infants be universally saved, then will evolve the result that must occasion feelings of joy and holy gratitude to every heart, that the great majority of the human race shall be saved; and that, instead of a small number only, as some have supposed, eventually reaching glory, “a great multitude, whom no man can number,” shall “stand

before the throne with palms in their hands, kings and conquerors and priests, through Him that loved them and washed them in his blood, and redeemed them out of every kindred and people and tongue."

We purposely abstain from even mentioning many other objections to the proposition we intend to demonstrate. A fertile fancy and a repugnance to a truth may invent innumerable objections to it. Abuses also may be appended to it; but for these it is not answerable. Use is God's design; abuse is the perversion of man. Heaven's best blessings have been perverted. Evil men can turn any mercy into means of evil. It is one of the effects of sin, that man has in every instance the secret of that awful chemistry which can transmute a blessing into a bane, and distil deadly poison from precious truths. The tarantula spider extracts noxious venom from the most delicious blossoms. So man can extract poison from the fruits of the tree of life, and death from the very leaves which are for the healing of the nations of the earth. But to object to a doctrine because it may be abused, or to reject it because it may be misapplied or perverted, is just to imitate the man who would cut down a beautiful fruit-tree because caterpillars find food from its leaves, and spiders weave their webs amid its branches. We must test conclusions by "the law and the testimony," and not by the real or anticipated abuses to which they may be open.

Grace has been made the pretext for licentiousness; and that cross on which man's sins ought to be crucified has been used to cover and conceal them.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING thus cleared the way for the application of positive reasons for the universal salvation of infants, we now proceed to unfold these reasons as succinctly as possible.

It will be admitted by all, that the bodies of infants will be raised at the resurrection morn. On this there can scarcely be a doubt. The language of Scripture is explicit—"I saw the dead, small and great," (that is, *infants* and *adults*,) "stand before God;" "and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them;" and "ALL that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth." This great resurrection embraces all ages and all climes. We must include in this mighty assemblage numbers of infants as well as adults: they are among the "all." To this the apostle seems to allude, when he says, "every one shall be raised in his own order." The literal translation is, "in his own class:" infants in their class, adults in their class; males in their class, females in their class—"every one in his own order." Now, if it be true that the bodies of infants are to be raised from the grave, we may fairly inquire, what may be the purpose or design

of thus raising their sleeping dust from its resting-place, and reuniting each infant soul to its body? It cannot be to be judged: for the judgment proceeds according to *works* done in the body, and infants have done no works: by these they can neither stand nor fall. In every record of the judgment morn, the statement is, that it proceeds, not according to the *merit* of works, (far from that,) but according to works as the manifestation of a principle of grace within. It is therefore obvious, that infants, having had neither the opportunity nor the physical power of manifesting character by their conduct upon earth, cannot be raised to be judged according to the deeds done in the body: they are not just subjects of the judgment ordeal. It cannot deal with them. In the next place, infants cannot be raised to be condemned, soul and body, to everlasting punishment. Because such punishment is not a part of the original curse that was pronounced upon Adam. The curse pronounced upon Adam was, "Thou shalt surely die:" that is, the soul shall die, and the body shall die; and when the one is severed from the other, the penalty is exhausted. The punishment apportioned to them who have either rejected the overtures of the glorious gospel, or have stained their souls with sin and their hands with wickedness, can never, surely, be the desert of infants. They can be the subjects of no other than the primitive curse. But to raise their bodies again, and to reunite them to their souls in order to suffer, would be as unjust as it

would be unwarranted, because it would be apportioning greater punishment than the original sentence contained. It would be the infliction of a doom severer than God pronounced in Paradise. But God's truth never errs, either in excess or short-coming. We, therefore, conclude, that when infants are raised from the dead, they are so raised *not to be judged*, for there are no works according to which they can be judged; they are not raised *to suffer*, because this would be unmerited excess of the original sentence. Why are they raised? What can be the design of this act? They are raised, surely, in order to be admitted into the realms of glory; that, reclothed with more august apparel than Adam lost, they may take their place in the midst of those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

But this presumption amounts almost to certainty, if we bear in mind, that if infants' bodies are raised from the dead, then is there in this fact, what is most important, the actual removal of half the primeval curse; for its penalty was the death of soul and body both. Now, if we find that the body is raised, which is the removal of half the curse, may we not, in full harmony with the presumptions of reason, and, above all, in perfect coincidence with the merciful genius of the gospel, infer that the other half of the curse is remitted also? and that the soul and body shall be reunited, to inherit together everlasting happiness?

We are also to connect with this fact the truth, that this resurrection of their bodies is the direct fruit of the atonement and resurrection of Christ; because if Christ had not died and risen again, there had been no resurrection. The very resurrection of the body is the result of the atonement of Christ; and in that sense it extends to every man. Now if infants' bodies are raised from the dead, and this wholly through Christ's resurrection, and as the result of His perfect atonement, and if thus half the curse is remitted by the efficacy of the Saviour's blood, and by the virtues of His resurrection from the dead, may we not infer that the other half will be remitted also, and that soul and body will live and rejoice together in the presence of the Lord for ever?

With respect to those who are born amid the means of grace and opportunities of mercy, there is one only cause given in the gospel for their condemnation, viz., their wilful rejection of the gospel: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And again, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life." If, then, this be the almost only condemning sin, which consigns those who are guilty of it to misery, it is clear, from the nature of the case, that infants never committed that sin, because they are physically and morally incapable of it. Since, therefore, infants have not

committed the only condemning sin, they cannot and will not be ranked amid the condemned hereafter.

Nor will it alter the conclusion to which we have come, if it be alleged that infants will be tried by the standard according to which the destinies of the heathen, who never heard the gospel, will be decided. That standard is laid down by the great apostle of the Gentiles in Rome: "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." This language contemplates responsible beings; it presumes they are capable of conduct in conformity or in contrariety to their convictions, and have within their bosoms, consciences to accuse or excuse the guilty. But these characteristics do not belong to infants. They cannot be the subjects in any sense of such a responsibility. They are unconscious of the distinctions that subsist between right and wrong. They do not comprehend the authority, nature, and obligations of law, unless vaguely and dimly. They cannot, therefore, be classed with unevangelized heathens at the judgment-day. This illustration is therefore totally inapplicable to infants. They can be accused neither of rejecting

the gospel nor of violating the law. If grace cannot save them, which is not the case, we may be sure that works cannot condemn them. Moral inability is justly dealt with as sin. Physical inability is simply misfortune.

Let it not be supposed that I deny the doctrine of original sin. To do so would be to deny fact and to dispute scripture. But of this I am fully persuaded—that none will be condemned for its taint alone. Satan introduced it; and if any should perish on this footing alone, it would be a trophy which Satan is not destined, we think, to carry away. There will not be one lost soul in misery who can blame any one but himself for his terrible doom. But, as far as I can judge of those representations of the state of the lost which scripture furnishes, I venture to assert, that infants are incapable of its sufferings. This is a strong assertion, but it is, I humbly think, a perfectly correct one. What are some of the scripture representations of hell? It is men who have “sown to the flesh,” “reaping corruption;” it is men who have sown iniquity, reaping punishment. It is “the worm that never dieth”—an accusing conscience, the fell agony of ceaseless remorse—the remembrance of rejected grace—of abused mercies—of rebellion against God, and of war with duty and with conscience. These constitute “the worm that dieth not;” these make up and feed the flame of that “fire that is not quenched.” But an infant is totally incapable, of those poignant sufferings—those stings and ago-

nies of remorse,—because an infant never resisted conscience, or wilfully violated duty, or committed a single deliberate transgression. Since, therefore, these feelings of remorse are the chief elements of the sufferings of the lost, and as infants, by their very nature, must be entire strangers to such feelings, it follows that they are incapable of suffering the fearful punishment of the lost, so far, at least, as the nature of that punishment can be ascertained from the pages of the inspired volume.

But perhaps the most satisfactory proofs that deceased infants are universally saved, will be found in the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It bears peculiarly on this subject. It beams hope and joy to weepers from every text. It discloses the fall slumbering under the sunbeams of the recovery, and the wrecks of sin presenting foretokens of the triumphs of grace, and on the withered stem of humanity it reveals buds of approaching beauty, and blossoms, and fruit.

In the fourteenth verse we read, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come." Now who are they that "have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgressions?" that is, by personal and actual transgression. Not the heathen, for they do "sin after the similitude of it;" not professing Christians, for they also "sin after that similitude."

There is but one class who have not sinned *actually*, and that is infants. The allusion, therefore, in this text refers us, unquestionably, we submit, to infants, and of them it declares that "death reigned even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." We cannot but here observe, as we pass, the happy place which infants occupy in this text. The first Adam was "a figure of Him that was to come," that is, the Second Adam, which is Christ. Now infants are placed, in this text, between the two Adams, inheriting a taint from the first, but transferring that taint constantly to the second, which is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." They are here less the victims, and rather the conductors of the curse that comes down from the first, and the recipients wholly of the righteousness that is transferred from the second. They are thus connected with the first by natural descent; and connected with the second by grace. Lost in the former, they are saved in the latter; they die in Adam, and they live in Christ. §

Let us refer again to another part of this chapter. "If through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more

they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Now it is asserted here, that just in the same way in which sin has been transmitted from the first Adam to all his posterity, righteousness is transferred from the Second Adam (who is Christ) to all mankind, *if nothing interfere to arrest the transfer*: this is the single exception. We find, that Adam's sin is transferred to all Adam's children without limitation; and in the very same way, and by parity of reasoning, Christ's righteousness may be transferred to all mankind, the blessing being co-extensive with the curse, *except where something interferes to divert it*. In the case of adults, there is often an interposing obstruction: in other words, unbelief, or rejection of the gospel, forms a positive barrier against the entrance of the truth, and of that righteousness of which the truth is the vehicle. But in the case of infants there can be no such barrier; from the very condition they occupy, there can be raised up no such deliberate obstruction; and, therefore, as the full flood of mercy and truth, of righteousness and peace, those intermingling elements of the great salvation, like a hallowed river, pours from heaven to earth, and

spreads over the wide world, seeking admission into every man's hope, and access to every man's heart, and bearing on its bosom the hopes of glory, and the promises of joy, and the seals of peace to many souls; it finds no obstruction to its entrance, in the case of infants, adequate to repel it, and therefore fills their hearts with its fulness, and rises with them to its level, and fits them for their glorious destiny. In these babes there is a channel by which Adam's sin has entered. It is not unscriptural to conclude thus, that by the very same channel Christ's righteousness can enter too.

Wilful and deliberate rejection seems to be the only act that shuts out the salvation of the gospel. It enters where there is such rejection. This argument seems to me perfectly conclusive. The flood of offered mercy, being co-extensive with the flood of the overspreading curse, would reach every man and satisfy every man, if there were no barrier raised to repel it; but in infant's hearts there is, as far as we know, no barrier, and therefore there it may enter, transforming the hearts it touches, saving and sanctifying the souls it reaches; and thereby infants' spirits as well as martyrs' souls, may, and do now stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb, arrayed in white, with palms of victory.

It is also asserted by St. Paul as one characteristic of this dispensation, that, "where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded." If, now, where sin hath abounded, the taint of original

guilt has reached every infant, though *incapable of any overt act by which it might identify itself with Adam*, may we not presume, or rather infer, that, where “*grace hath much more abounded*” the same infant may inherit the righteousness of Christ *without any personal and voluntary reception of it*, because it is, by its very condition as an infant, incapable of it? If, irrespective of *personal demerit*, sin and death scathe the new-born babe, may not the glorious righteousness of Christ reach and recover it, though it have *no personal merit*, or have no exercise of that faith through which the atonement is usually conveyed to the guilty? If sovereignty has left each babe beneath the upas-tree of which Adam ate and died, it is not presumption to infer that the same sovereignty, of which the component elements are faithfulness, and love, and truth, will also place the same helpless babe, about to be gathered to eternity, beneath the transforming and refreshing shade of that tree of life whose “*fruit is for food, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.*”

It may be objected here, that throughout the scriptures, salvation is represented as invariably tied to faith. True, it is; but this of necessity refers to them only who are capable of exercising faith, that is to say, adults. To require faith in infants, is to require a physical impossibility, and if faith, the instrument of salvation, is the free gift of God in the case of every believing adult, may we not fairly presume that in the case of infants,

who cannot receive the gift, because they have no ability to appreciate its nature or its object, God will bestow the end without it. He can work with, or without, or against means, when his own high purposes demand it. And in the case of deceased infants, there seems to be an occasion worthy of a suspension of ordinary means, in order to confer an extraordinary blessing.

Here I cannot but quote a beautiful epitaph, inscribed on a tombstone, beneath which repose the ashes of four infants, which conveys forcibly the truth we are now arguing:—

“ Bold Infidelity, turn pale and die.
 Beneath this stone four infants’ ashes lie;
 Say, are they lost or sav’d?
 If death’s by sin, they sinn’d: for they lie here.
 If heav’n’s by works, in heav’n they can’t appear.
 Reason, ah! how deprav’d!
 Revere the Bible’s sacred page: the knot’s untied;
 They died, for Adam sinn’d; they live, for Jesus died.”

Holy and beautiful is the thought. The Second Adam is seen surrounded with the infant heirs of joy, whom the first Adam ruined, now, however, reclaimed and restored. These infants tasted death that it might be seen how truly our first forefather wrecked us all; but have now received everlasting life, that it may be seen and celebrated throughout eternity, that “where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded.”

It would also appear, from Scripture, that one leading design of its own author, our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ, is the destruction of Satan and the depression of his pride — so much so, that it shall be seen in eternity, that not one particle of his malignant policy has prevailed, nor one of his prospects been realized.

Now it does seem, if departed infants be not universally saved, that Satan has obtained no small amount of his anticipated victories. In seducing Adam and Eve, Satan meant, either, on the one hand, to force God to destroy this world, in which His smiles gave beauty to so many blossoms, and His breath fragrance to so many flowers, of which He himself had pronounced the verdict “very good;” or, on the other hand, to lead God to pronounce one universal and indiscriminate amnesty upon every creature that had transgressed, and thereby unhinge His moral government, connive at crime, and compromise the claims of holiness and truth. It was his design to lead the Almighty either to destroy this beautiful world and its rational offspring, as a baulked and disappointed Creator, or when the creature sinned, to pardon all the sin, and thus dissolve the fixed and everlasting tie that connects sin with suffering, and iniquity with death. These were the extremes, either of which Satan made sure of accomplishing. In both he is thoroughly disappointed. The atonement is the glorious solution of seemingly inextricable difficulties, — it has inscribed the lesson on the floors of heaven, and upon the acres of the earth, which saints read and worship, and sinners see and fear. “The

wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." But if infants are lost, not because of personal transgression, but because of their connexion with the first Adam, Satan has so far triumphed; nay, if this be so, half of the human race are ruined for ever by Satan's policy alone, and without any personal guilt or iniquity of their own. But we know this cannot be—we know that the serpent's head is bruised—and that what he thought would be his crowns of victory, shall be burning brands about his temples. He shall not prevail. He will not be able to point out one lost soul in hell as the fruit of his malignity. It is there because it wilfully refused the only deliverer. It chose the curse, and put away the blessing.

Infants, however, are not lost, for none shall perish but those that reject the cure; none shall inherit the serpent's curse, but those that imbibe the serpent's spirit. And on the other hand, all who are saved are saved only through the mediation and by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus; God's love provided the sacrifice, and His glory is the result to which it leads. Every portion of the scheme of mercy is the gift of love, the conception of wisdom; and on every doctrine is inscribed the name, and from every victory it wins will evolve the honour of Deity.

No portion of the glory of the saved shall belong to any creature in heaven or earth, and nothing of the woe and misery to which the lost have sunk shall be attributed by the victims to any but

themselves. Neither shall man be lost — nor the world destroyed — nor God dishonoured by the policy of Satan. The very reverse shall be the fact. Not one soul shall be lost because of Satan's success in Paradise. On the contrary, his momentary and apparent triumph shall be overruled by Infinite Wisdom, to be the means of bringing many sons to a greater happiness, and of giving greater glory to God. They that perish, perish by their rejection of Christ's gospel, not by their inheritance of Adam's sin. Not Satan's success, but their own suicidal resistance of truth necessitates their doom. Satan's kingdom is destroyed, and Satan's expectations are crushed by the very nature of the gospel; and thus, if deceased infants be universally saved through grace, as these statements seem to imply, there will be left to Satan not one single fragment or wreck that he can quote as a proof of the success of his stratagems, or a fruit of his wickedness in the garden of Eden.

Thus his head will be crushed — thus the very victims he hoped to retain as symbols of his might are snatched from his fangs, and enrolled in the Lamb's book of life as heirs of happiness; and those who sink into the abyss in which "life dies, and death lives," will be there, not murdered by Satan, but suicides—not proofs of the power of his will, but the monuments of the awful infatuation of their own depraved hearts.

In the eighth Psalm there is presented another proof of the salvation of infants, an unequivocal

intimation that amid the multitudes that grace the triumphs of the Son of God, infants will not be wanting—"O Lord our Lord! how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of Thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." The apostle Paul, in reasoning upon this very Psalm in the epistle to the Hebrews, quotes it as descriptive of Christ in the days of His final triumph. It is in the second chapter. "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." The sacred penman states, that the Psalm refers to that period when Christ shall reign from sea to sea—all rebellious elements being laid prostrate, and creation clothed afresh with more than its pristine holiness, and beauty, and bliss. Amid the anthem-peal of praise that rises up to Him from the redeemed

earth, the Psalmist hears infant treble beautiful and welcome in the rich diapason: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings." Some of the sweetest hymns which shall be heard in the millennial era, will be infant hymns; amid the harmony that rolls around the throne, will be melodies by infant voices expressive of the gratitude and joy of full infant hearts. How precious is the truth, that parents, if saints of God, shall join in the songs of heaven with their departed babes, who have already struck the key-note, and wait for them to join with them.

In the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, we have an outline of the proceedings of the judgment-day, which also bears somewhat on this topic: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books (the plural number) were opened." There are two books symbolically referred to in Scripture: the book in which are the names and deeds of the unbelieving, and the book in which are the names and deeds of the children of God. Now after these two books had been opened, we read, "And another book was opened, which is the book of life." We connect this with the eleventh chapter of Revelation — "And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and unto the saints and them that fear Thy name, *small and great*." At the production of these three books, infants, or the small,

are present with the great, and, therefore, we may presume, that, while the two books contain the deeds of the evil, and the deeds of the good; the third book, which is "the Lamb's book of life," is that in which the names of the lambs of the flock are written, the memorial and record of those who barely lived before they died, who had scarcely breathed the air of time when they were transferred to breathe the sweeter and the balmier atmosphere of eternity.

We cannot conceive what other record that can be "which is the Lamb's Book of Life." If it be what we have alleged, then upon its tablets the names of our infants now in glory are inscribed. Theirs is a peculiar case, and theirs, therefore, is a specific but glorious record. Each name is illuminated with everlasting splendour, while each possessor is bathed in that flood which is "fulness of joy for evermore."

On no other ground, we may also observe, than on that of the universal safety of deceased infants, can we account for the vast multitudes declared in Scripture to be ultimately saved. The various expressions used in Scripture respecting the final salvation of men, unquestionably imply that a very great number will be eternally saved. "After this I beheld, and lo, A GREAT MULTITUDE, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice,

saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." "A GREAT MULTITUDE which no man can number," is the characteristic of the finally saved; showing that it is not a minority, but a majority, that shall at last be admitted to glory. Christ in numbers, as in glory, shall have the pre-eminence. In the nineteenth of Revelation, again, we read, "And I heard as it were the voice of a *great multitude*, and as the voice of many waters:" another expression denoting the vast number of the saved. Again: Christ is to "bring *many* sons unto glory." And again: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many*." And again: "As by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many* be made righteous."

This is a sweet and blessed thought. The great multitude of mankind will not be lost; a minority only will perish. The prospect dilates the heart of all philanthropy, and destroys the objections of sceptics and infidels. They wrong our faith who call it narrow. They wrong its fountain also when they pronounce His mercies few. The myriads shall mount to glory. Minorities only will sink to hell, and this not because there is not room or welcome in heaven.

There are texts expressly asserting the safety of dead infants which we have not yet quoted. There is, for instance, one passage descriptive of David's feelings on the loss of his infant, which, with its context, throws light on this subject. "And the

Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David, therefore, besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead! But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I SHALL

GO TO HIM, BUT HE SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME." —
2 *Sam.* xii. 15—23.

If ever there was a case where the infant might be expected to suffer hereafter for the father's sin, it was that of David as described in this passage. Yet David's conviction of his own sin, expressed so poignantly in the fifty-first Psalm, and anxiety about his own spiritual safety, did not cloud his assurance of the safety of this babe. He hoped, he felt sure, to meet him in that purer and better land whither he had gone before him.

But in the Gospel of St. Mark, chap. x. verse 14, we have a still more conclusive proof of the happy destiny of dead infants. Rude nature attempted to repel the infants which were borne on their mothers' bosoms to their Saviour King; but He who ever spake as man never spake, rebuked the refusals of man, and opened the bosom of God as the home of infants: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." These words, however, have been misapprehended by some. It has been asserted, that all we collect from them is, that "of such child-like nature are they who enter the kingdom of heaven." But surely this interpretation is forced and unnatural. It is not sense to say, "Suffer infants to come unto me; for of adults with child-like character is the kingdom of heaven." The true and literal interpretation is, "of such infants is heaven chiefly made up." In other words, the larger proportion of the inhabitants of heaven are those who died in infancy. This is the interpreta-

tion of the most judicious commentators. It is the natural one too.

Abraham Booth says, "This text has a smiling aspect on the final destiny of infants." Doddridge says, "It means, that of infants the kingdom of heaven is chiefly composed." Dwight coincides with Doddridge. John Newton says, "Departed infants make up the innumerable company that is now in glory." Toplady and Wesley, differing in many points, agree that this text proves the salvation of departed infants. Bishop Horsley is of the same opinion. Lastly, Bishop Taylor says, "Christ took upon Him our nature to sanctify and save it, and passed through the several periods of it, even unto death, which is the symbol of old age; and, therefore, it is certain that Christ did sanctify all the periods of life: and why should He be an infant but that infants should receive the crown of their age, the purification of their stained nature, the sanctification of their persons, and the saving of their souls, by their infant Lord and their elder Brother?"

It jars with all the feelings of humanity and reason to suppose that the Saviour, who blessed them on earth, rejected them in heaven—that He who welcomed them around him in his humiliation, should repel them from his presence in his glory. Can we suppose, that when these infants died in infancy, (and that some of them did die in infancy is extremely probable,) the very same voice that said in tones of mercy, "Suffer these infants to

come unto me," would say to those very infants at the judgment-seat, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" It is impossible. The same mouth, on the same subjects, and with the same amount of merit or demerit, cannot pronounce at once blessing and cursing.

These infant buds, therefore, that seem nipt on earth, are merely removed to heaven, there to unfold themselves in everlasting bloom. Nature leaves them pining upon earth, but Grace takes them in her gentle hand, wraps them in her warm bosom, and wafts them away to the better land.

"See, then, how soon the flowers of life decay,
How soon terrestrial pleasures fade away.
A star of comfort for a moment given,
Just rose on earth, then set to rise in heaven.
Redeem'd by God from sin, releas'd from pain,
Its life were punishment, its death is gain.
Though it be hard to bid thy heart divide,
To lay the gem of all thy love aside,
Faith tells thee, (and it tells thee not in vain,)
That thou shalt meet thine infant yet again.
While yet on earth thine ever-circling arms
Held it securest from surrounding harms;
Yet even there disease could aim the dart,
Chill the warm cheek, and stop the flutt'ring heart;
No ill can reach it now; it rests above,
Safe in the bosom of celestial love.
Its short, but yet tempestuous way is o'er,
And tears shall trickle down its cheek no more.
Then far be grief; faith looks beyond the tomb,
And heaven's bright portals sparkle thro' the gloom.
If bitter thoughts and tears in heaven could be,
It is thine infant that should weep for thee."

Mrs. Wilson writes very sweetly: "It is only my child's mortal part that rests in silence; his spirit is with God in his temple above. He is one of the redeemed, who now throng the courts of heaven, and surround the throne of the Most High. Boundless perfection constitutes his felicity, unceasing praises dwell upon his lips, his holiness is for ever perfected, and his affections are made to flow in ever-during channels, toward the Source of infinite perfection, and through all those subordinate streams where it is distributed. The light of heaven encircles him, and its splendours delight his soul. His vision is unclouded, and penetrates into the deep things of God. I see him among the glorious throng, now bending in holy adoration of the majesty of heaven, now a commissioned messenger of mercy to other and far distant worlds. Perhaps he hovers now around our dwelling; perhaps he will stand at heaven's portals, and be the first to usher us into the presence-chamber of the King. Shall I then continue to shed unavailing tears, and selfishly repine at the short, the momentary separation? He will never return to us, but we shall go to him. In regard to our beloved child, we can take up the triumphant song, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

CHAPTER V.

THE death of an infant is a very solemn and a very impressive spectacle. It is not natural,—it is most unnatural. To see a beautiful face, unfolding bright visions of coming sweetness, bespread with holy calm, and imaging forth the features of its father, become channelled with tears, and tender organs become the instruments only of weeping and of crying, must pain a stranger, and still more a parent. Without the page of Christianity there is no solution of the awful mystery, nor any comfort to the mourner. There is something in the scene that tells us that some fell disaster has overtaken our race and marred its primeval glory. God never made us so; God did not intend that we should be so. Death is not a native of our world, or an emanation from heaven. It is a foreigner, an invader, a usurper.

God created us to live for ever. Sin introduced death, and every hillocked grave we look upon, every death we witness, every mourner we see upon the streets, preaches to us in no dumb eloquence, “the wages of sin is death.”

Upon the pallid face of the dead infant, there are awfully mysterious hieroglyphics, which reason cannot decipher, which nature witnessing weeps.

Christianity alone reads them. She pours from the fountain of truth living light into each dark symbol, and illuminates it with the rays of the past, and the lights of the future. The gospel explains to us the nature, effects, and issues of sin. It shows us that sin is a fearful evil. Life's sorest calamities are nothing when compared with the essential evil compressed in that monosyllable, sin. We must strive against it in the strength of God the Holy Spirit. May He pierce our hearts with a new consciousness of its evil, with a new and intenser thirst after emancipation from its thralldom, its misery, and its spread!

What lessons do we gather from the faces of the infant dead? Does it not seem as if the dead infant had been given of God for no purpose? we are sometimes tempted to ask. Does it not look like a blank, or something that has failed to answer the great end of its being? Not at all. Nothing in the universe of God fails to answer its end. The ephemera that starts into life at sunrise, and dies at sunset, answers the end of its existence as truly as the hierarch that waits before the throne. In like manner the infant that lives one hour, and spends that hour in cries, accomplishes the end of its existence—it may be, a sublime and solemn destiny. Living and dying, it acts upon the world:—“Being dead it speaketh.” We believe that the infant in its brief and weeping pilgrimage preaches more eloquently than the pastor in the pulpit, and by its death seals its testimony as

solemnly as the martyr at the stake. What is a dead infant but an ambassador of God, arrayed, not in the robes of the priest, but in the weeds of the grave, who has preached by its example to a family, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"—and sealed that lesson by its own departure? Each dead infant has been honoured to be a minister and martyr both, and now reaps the joy of each. It is a herald in time, and an heir in eternity. There is a grandeur about its cradle, and a sublimity reposing on its grave which we do well to ponder. God consecrates many ministers whom man refuses to hear.

How consoling are the views which this subject presents to those parents who are bereaved of their children! Theirs is privilege as well as pain. Of the destiny of their little ones who have preceded them we have no manner of doubt. It has not been thus with all Christian parents: Job saw his sons and his daughters in the meridian of age laid prostrate before him. Aaron beheld his two sons struck down by the bolt of heaven, in the midst of their rebellion against God. But it can be little painful in comparison, to the Christian parent, to behold the infant die, because he knows that that infant has been forgiven not only its original sin, but forgiven, in addition, through the rich mercy of God, its seventy years of weary pilgrimage. It has gained the crown without the turmoil; it has reached the goal without running off the course;

its harvest has been heaped upon its seed-time ; it has reaped without sowing. It has been invested with distinguishing privilege ; and surely no Christian parent would wish an infant back again to earth. Could you say, let me ask of every parent that has lost an infant — could you say to your infant, if it were to come back, “ Weep no more, my child ? ” Could you dry all the tears from its eye, so that it should mourn no more ? What could you promise it ? Seventy years of sore pilgrimage at the very best, in a world where men must become almost martyrs to get their daily bread ; where all is hollow, deceptive, unreal, and where every moment as it speeds tells us that the great ocean-tide of eternity is rising and rolling on, and carrying millions unprepared to the judgment-seat of God. Better is the babe in its Father’s home. We must not wish to recall it. The tears of nature are wiped away by the hand of grace. We will not sorrow because our infants are removed. Let us rather rejoice. “ The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be His name ; ” and “ blessed are the dead that die in Him, for they rest from their labours. ” They go (happy and holy ones !) from a life of martyrdom to a life of millennial blessedness ; and if an infant tongue in heaven could be audible on earth, that infant’s tongue would say—Weep not for me ; “ if ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I am gone unto my Father. ”

THE DYING INFANT TO ITS MOTHER.

Cease here longer to detain me,
Fondest mother, drowned in woe.
Now thy kind caresses pain me :
Morn advances — let me go.

See yon orient streak appearing,
Harbinger of endless day :
Hark ! a voice the darkness cheering,
Calls my new-born soul away.

Lately launched, a trembling stranger,
On the world's wild, boisterous flood,
Pierced with sorrows, tossed with danger,
Gladly I return to God.

Now my cries shall cease to grieve thee,
Now my trembling heart finds rest ;
Kinder arms than thine receive me,
Softer pillow than thy breast.

There, my mother, pleasures centre ;
Weeping, parting, care, or woe,
Ne'er our Father's house shall enter :
Morn advances — let me go.

The hour is on the wing when we shall meet
them, and mingle our hosannahs with theirs.

There is something pleasing also in this fact :
that every infant that you lose is a link that binds
you to the grave, on the one hand, and a link also
that binds you to eternity on the other. A portion
of yourself has taken possession of the tomb, to re-
mind you that you must lie down there. A soul
that was related to yourself has taken possession of
eternity, to remind you that you must enter there.
Our bodies are, through our infants, in communion

with the dust; and our spirits, through theirs, with the everlasting throne. We are so disposed to strike the roots of our affections into this fading and fainting earth, that it becomes mercy on the part of God to send those chastisements, which loosen our affections from a world doomed to flame. Each infant that we lose is a tie (holy and happy truth!) less to bind us to this world, and a tie more to bind our hearts to that better world where our infants have preceded us. It is thus God gradually loosens the tree before it falls. Death thus loses half its pain before it overtakes us. Happy truth, if we realize it! Happy lesson, if we feel it! Good and gracious is that Father, who thus preaches to His people from the infant's bier, when they will not learn the lesson which they need from His ambassadors in the pulpit!

To unbelieving and unconverted parents, the death of their infant speaks in solemn and impressive tones. Those parents whose hearts dilate only with this world's vanities and follies, and not with that living peace which God can give, are summoned by their best feelings to the cross. Though they are guilty of violating God's law, and yet more in refusing Christ's gospel, their infants, if lost during the period of infancy, are not suffering the consequences of their parents' guilt; they rest from their tears, they are snatched from the contagion of their company. Here is mercy to their souls as well as mercy to their bodies. Their infants are in perennial peace; but if the parents die

unsaved, unsanctified, untransformed, unrenewed, a yawning chasm must separate them from their infants for ever and ever. Theirs will be the joy, but yours, unconverted reader, must be the sadness; theirs the blessing, but yours for ever the conscious and consuming curse. No interchange of love shall ever cross the gulf that severs you. The stroke that severs you in time severs you in eternity also.

Does not the universal salvation of deceased infants cast a new and harmonizing light on God's providential dealings in the world? We often lament that the Chinese are infanticides and that the Hindoos are stained as a people with the murder of innocents! Any one reasoning naturally upon this would say, This looks like a discord in the harmonious dealings of Providence, a departure from the beneficence that seems otherwise to overflow the works of our heavenly Father. But the truth we have endeavoured to teach assures us there is mercy in this ministration: when infants are received to glory, the olive blooms on that murdered infant's tomb, and the palm waves in its infant hand, and the stroke that severs the soul from the heathen parent wafts it to the bosom of a holy God. From the worst barbarities of the heathen, God's love and wisdom thus extract blessings. He overrules the Hindoo mother forgetting her infant, and the Chinese mother sacrificing hers, to be the means of that infant's translation to a

place of perpetual happiness and perennial joy. It throws a new light on what we have regarded as the most savage of heathen customs, the most unnatural of heathen practices. It tells us that, with all the numberless infants left to perish in the Ganges, or to die in the streets of Pekin, it is well. The earthly parent may forget the ties of nature, but the everlasting Parent forgets not the covenant of grace. These babes suffered for a minute, that they might inherit "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Weep, weep not o'er thy children's tomb,
O Rachel, weep not so ;
The bud is cropt by martyrdom,
The flower in heaven shall blow.

Firstlings of faith ! the murderer's knife
Hath missed its deadly aim ;
The God for whom they gave their life
For them to suffer came.

Though evil were their days and few,
Baptized in blood and pain,
He knows them, whom they never knew,
And they shall live again,

Then weep not o'er thy children's tomb,
O Rachel, weep not so ;
The bud is cropt by martyrdom,
The flower in heaven shall blow.

Let all we have said bind us to the gospel with greater fervour and with greater force. Let us revere our holy faith, not for its outward forms,

but for its inward spirit, its bright hopes, its deep comforts. That vision must be dim and that heart must be cold that cannot see or feel the grandeur of the gospel. It is not the robed priest, the golden shrine, the gorgeous ritual, the pealing organ, that are the ennobling characteristics of the Christian faith; these are the "beggarly elements." The broken heart is God's dwelling-place; the holy thought, the peaceful acquiescence, consolation hanging over a death-bed, and hope pluming its wing upon the grave, the unswerving faith, the living joy, the holy life—these shed a consecration over the humblest spot, which cathedrals have not, and attach us to our fathers' faith, from motives and principles which wrangling parties neither feel nor care for.

Let us love the gospel. Let us anticipate its everlasting prospects, and thereby bring down a portion of heaven into our being upon earth. In that happy land are the good and great—patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and faithful ministers—all whose sacred eloquence has stirred our affections, all whose holy lessons have built up within us the faith and the love of Christ. Our babes are there also. They constitute together one holy and happy brotherhood. They invite us to follow from their seats of blessedness. We say again, let us love the gospel. May its real hopes, and living truths, and rich consolations, penetrate our hearts yet more profoundly. Let us, above all, live the gospel. May we toil,

and suffer, and sacrifice, to spread it. May our spared children grow up to proclaim it, and "if needs be" to die for it.

The following extract we venture to add, from the lectures of Dr. Chalmers on Rom. iv. 9—15.

"This affords, we think, something more than a dubious glimpse into the question that is often put by a distracted mother, when her babe is taken away from her. When all the converse it ever had with the world amounted to the gaze upon it of a few months, or a few opening smiles, which marked the dawn of felt enjoyment—and ere it had reached, perhaps, the lisp of infancy, it, all unconscious of death, had to wrestle through a period of sickness with its power, and at length to be overcome by it.—Oh! it little knew what an interest it had created in that home where it was so passing a visitant; nor, when carried to its early grave, what a tide of emotion it would raise among the few acquaintances it left behind it. On its baptism was impressed as a seal—and as a sign it was never falsified.—There was no positive unbelief in its little bosom, no resistance yet put forth to the truth, no love at all for the darkness rather than the light—nor had it yet fallen into that great condemnation which will attach to all who perish because of unbelief, that their deeds are evil. It is interesting to know that God instituted circumcision for the infant children of the Jews, and at least suffered baptism for the infant children of

those who profess Christianity. Should the child die in infancy, the use of baptism as a sign has never been thwarted by it — and may we not be permitted to indulge a hope so pleasing as that the use of baptism as a seal remains in all its entireness, that he who sanctioned the affixing of it to a babe, will fulfil upon it the whole expression of this ordinance? And when we couple with this the known disposition of our great Forerunner, the love that He manifested to children on earth, how He suffered them to approach his person — and lavished endearments and kindness upon them in the streets of Jerusalem, told his disciples that the presence and company of such as these in heaven formed one ingredient of the joy that was set before him.

“Tell us if Christianity do not throw a pleasing radiance around an infant’s tomb? And should any parent who hears us feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof — and at the end of its little period, expired — we cannot think that we venture too far when we say, that he has only to persevere in the faith, and the following of the gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk has been transplanted there to a place of endurance, and it will then gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection that has been sorely wounded — and in the name

of Him who, if on earth, would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present to sorrow not even as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow, no separation."

"Oh, when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An overpayment of delight?"

CHAPTER VI.

THERE is a great personal and practical lesson we are slow to learn, though it has been not only learned, but illustrated in all who have preceded us. Job expressed it in these words: "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Let us endeavour to impress it on the hearts of parents who have lost their children, and to teach them to use and feel it. All around may be uncertain, but this is sure,—the fairest form must mingle with the dust; the strongest frame must be dissolved; the most exalted in the circles of mankind must, one day, "say to corruption, Thou art my mother; and to the worm, Thou art my sister." Every preacher of this truth must *personally* practise it. If we had the wings of the eagle, we cannot escape from it; if the strength of the lion, we cannot resist it; if the riches of Cræsus, we cannot bribe death; or if the voice of the nightingale, we cannot charm it away; were all our children around us, they could not defend us. It takes the monarch from his throne, the minister from his pulpit, the babe from the bosom of its mother. It comes to all, without exception; only, like the wilderness pillar, what is glory

to Israel is darkness to Egypt. Every eye that is now riveted on these words shall very soon be sealed in darkness; every ear that now hears shall soon be deaf; and the pulse of every heart, still; and every home the habitation of another; and "the place that knows us now, shall know us no more for ever."

Job said, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Experience taught him this too frequently forgotten lesson.

The history of his own household was to him the prophecy of his own dissolution. There were tombs beside him in the land of Uz, as there are around us in England; and on the memorial tablets of his dead children, he had already inscribed as their epitaph, this creed: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." On the green acres of his native land there rose graves, like wavelets on the ebbing sea of life. It was sown with the dead. He himself stood upon the ashes of his children, a forest-tree reft of the parasite plants that gave it beauty in exchange for sustenance, naked, dismantled; and every wind that swept past awoke amid the tossed and torn affections of his desolated heart—"I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Have we no similar mementos? Are there not in our memories still the lingering echoes of the muffled bell? Are there not in our homes broken circles whose arcs will not

be complete till time be no more? Look at the portrait on the wall—at the hatchment on the house—the hair in that locket—those books in the library—the mourners in the streets; and does not every one of these fragments reflect a known likeness, and present a comment on this our text?

Job's own *bodily sufferings* intimated also the same result. These increased and accumulated, and plainly tended, unless arrested in the providence of God, to dissolution. Disease is still the pioneer of death, the caterer for the grave. Every grey hair is evidence that death has breathed upon us; every headache is the touch of the icy finger of death on the seat of life, constituting each in succession an earnest intimation from on high, "Set your house in order."

Creation in the days of Job impressed on his mind the same conclusion. In the fourteenth chapter he shows he had thus learned, and gives instances of this teaching: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." The whole of this chapter is replete with such imagery. Does not autumn still preach the death of the year? When its breath hath swept the forests of the earth, the very trees look like crowds of skeletons shivering in the storm, yet pointing to the skies as if in expectancy of a revisit of the resurrection of the spring. Night is the death of day. Sleep, which is peculiar to earth, unknown in hea-

ven, and impossible in hell, is a semi-suspension of life—a type of death. Awake, we seem to have a hold of life; asleep, we seem to have let life go, and to lie helplessly at the mercy of death.

Job learned his lesson where we may learn it too, *from divine teaching*. He spoke, as did all the sacred writers, by the Spirit of God: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.” One would imagine that there would be very little necessity that God should teach a lesson every one cannot but see. One would imagine it as unnecessary to teach this, as that the needle points to the north. But if we may judge of the force of a conviction by the influence it exerts, we cannot but conclude, that in this instance, this is feeble indeed. We feel the truth in the text in its fullness and power, when we bury our dead; but soon the pomps of time, the pageantry of circumstance, and the excitements and rivalries of the world sweep over our hearts, and impressions we thought engraven by a pen of iron on the rock for ever, are effaced, like inscriptions on the sand, by the first wave of the advancing tide. David, aware of this, prays, “Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.” “Teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.”

Let us here also learn who is the immediate dispenser of death alike to ourselves and to our babes. “*Thou wilt bring me to death.*” We are prone to attribute all to second causes. When death comes,

we are often found saying, "If it had been so, it had been otherwise; if such aid had been called in, if such precautions had been taken, my child had not died." Faith will raise its head above all such encompassing perplexities, and say, with Eli, "It is the Lord." Job, amid the dim lights of the patriarchal dispensation, could say, "Not the winds that smote, nor the Sabeans that assailed, but 'the Lord, hath taken away.'" "*Thou wilt bring me to death.*" "The hairs of our head are numbered," and the days of our life also. "Is there not an appointed time to man on earth?" Disease has no infection and death no power, till the one is loosed and the other commissioned from God. He cuts down the flower, and, blessed thought! He spares the green and takes the ripe. What comes, is "the cup my father hath given me to drink;" and when most inexplicable, we have still light enough to read—"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Our feeling, however, in such circumstances, must not be the submission of *slaves*, but the acquiescence of *sons*.

Let us notice, in the next place, Job's *personal* application and appropriation of this truth—"I know that thou wilt bring *me* to death." For want of this, we miss the full effect of many of the most influential truths. Yet personal religion is emphatically the religion of the Bible; its truths are not only for humanity, but for me. "Thou hast brought my children, and Thou wilt bring *me* to death." "I know that *my* Redeemer liveth." "I

know in whom *I* have believed." "Whom have *I* in heaven but Thee?"

Do you thus translate Christianity from the impersonal into the personal? Do you feel, weeping mother, that the Bible was written and inspired as much for you, as if you were the only person in the universe? Do you so search it? Faith will enable you thus to concentrate scattered lights in one personal focus, and in its light to see your own souls linked to all great and enduring things above, below, or around you.

We have, next, the description of that change which our children have undergone in the words of Job. He calls it "death," and "the house appointed for all living." Death is the child of sin, though grace has made it the servant of Jesus. It is not annihilation. It is the separation, however, of soul and body; the latter ceasing to live, and the former leaving its tenement of clay as the lightning leaves its cloud, and changing, not its character, but its outward circumstances. The twain that God joined, death puts asunder; the holy wedlock is dissolved, the widowed dust reposes in the tomb, and the living spirit returns to him who gave it, to wait the sound of the last trump, and the heaving of the last earthquake.

"When the judgment trumpet calls,
Soul, rebuild thy house of clay,—
Immortality its walls,
And eternity its day."

There is nothing natural or desirable in death itself. It is the disorganization of an exquisite structure, the dissolution of a casket second only in loveliness and beauty to the jewel it contains; and, therefore, humanity, in all its instincts, shrinks from the catastrophe. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; *not for that we would be unclothed*, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The apostle would brave the swellings of Jordan, but only because of the beauty of the land that lies beyond it. We are ready to pass through the fiery ordeal, because conscious of the truth, that the skirts of our garments only shall be singed, while the soul, safe as in the citadel of God, shall only shine with greater lustre, rising on imperishable pinions, and resting not till it soars and sings with the seraphim beside the throne.

The body will not only experience death, but come also to "the house appointed for all living."

This is the only house that may be called the house of humanity. Into this house, palaces, courts, parliaments, churches, all incessantly pour forth their inmates. It is the abode of kings and queens, of nobles, clergy, peasants, and beggars; our fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and babes are there. It absorbs and annihilates all the petty distinctions of humanity. It is the *stand-point*, seen from which illustrious castles and ancestral halls dwindle into diminutive and remote perspective. Around the green hillocks of the

dead, every sect might feel Catholic, and bitter foes grow friendly, and jarring mankind become conscious of the gravitating influence of essential and common brotherhood.

It is a dark house — “a land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.”

There is no lamp suspended from its ceiling, no penetrating sunbeam, by the light of which the dead can read the promises or learn the doctrines of the Word of God. The first light that shall burst upon its chambers will be the twilight of an eternal day.

It is a solitary house. Though the kings and councillors of the earth are there, and with them the myriad millions of mankind, yet is there no communion: each is as much alone, as if none else were there.

It is also a silent house. “There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master.” Though so many groups of the dead are there, yet all is silence without suspension. The tongue of the eloquent is dumb, and the ear of the once captivated hearer is deaf. The living preacher may make the tombstone his pulpit, and the green sod his fald-stool, but the sleepers beneath hear him not. Over them the chimes of sabbath bells

may float, undulating in the air like a mother's brooding note, calling her children home: but they hear not. The first and only sound that will stir the ashes of the dead, or break the silence of the sepulchre, will be the knell of a dissolving world — "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment."

It is, too, an ancient house. Its first stone was laid in Paradise, and each generation since has been a layer added to it. Every living creature has risen like a wavelet, and kings, and nobles, and scholars, like wavelet crests on this ever-ebbing, ever-sounding sea, and have been sucked into its vortex in succession, and disappeared.

But even this house "appointed for all living," has a sun-lit side. It is not an eternal prison-house, but a resting-place, a cemetery — *κοιμητηριον* — a sleeping place. I see written upon every stone in the crowded church-yard — "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." I can hear in the depths of its silent chambers the lingering echoes of the voice of Jesus — "I am the resurrection and the life." And, probably, if I have appealed to nature — its autumn, its sleep, and its changes — for witnesses that all must die, we can educe no unimpressive intimations from the same lesson-book that all will live. The bud peeping from the hard bark of the tree — the rose emerging from the dry root — the winged

insect from its chrysalis are eloquent premonitions of death evolving life and immortality. Even decay itself has tints of life; the leaves that fall in autumn turn golden as they drop — the cold bleak winds of winter come in music, and the icicles suspended from the eaves of our houses, reflect the glories of the rainbow, and the sheen of palaces beyond the skies, as if to teach us to read resurrection lessons on the trophies and monuments of death.

It is not a strange house. Our fathers, and mothers, and babes have pre-occupied it. Their ashes are peacefully reposing under its guardianship.

“Grave, the guardian of our dust,
Grave, the treasury of the skies,
Every atom of its dust,
Rests in hope again to rise.”

The Lord of glory lay in it, perfuming it by His presence, and giving it a consecration which neither presbyters nor prelates can impart. “Come, see where the Lord lay.” On this “house appointed for all living,” the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is inscribed for an epitaph.

Brethren, “blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; *they* rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” “Absent from the body,” is “present with the Lord.” Do not cleave to this earth; do not feel toward it as your rest. “Weep as though you wept not, rejoice as though you rejoiced not.” Let not its glare blind you, nor its din stun you, nor its passions and its lusts creep

and curl around your heart, and chill it to eternal joys. See you not amid its palaces and halls "the house appointed for all living?" Hear you not amid the blending voices of the daughters of music, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living?"

Make sure of an interest in the precious sacrifice and meritorious passion of Jesus. In His righteousness you can meet death with joy. Through Him you will be more than conqueror. Death has no advantage, whether he come as a friend or as a foe; for in the one capacity you are prepared to welcome him, and in the other to vanquish him. It is only when death comes as a stranger, that his stroke is dreadful.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE is another lesson I would impress on bereaved parents, it is, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." This exhortation implies *that the things above are known to you*. We may love the *unseen*, but not the *unknown*: "Whom having not seen we love; and in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice." The things that are above are all inscribed and comprehended in the sacred Scriptures. The Bible is the map of heaven — the mirror of glory — the apocalypse of the land that is afar off. Christ came from heaven, shaking its fragrance from His wings; and the Scripture is the alabaster box that contains it. He came from above, uttering out its mysterious things, and leaving them stereotyped and permanent on the sacred page; therein we are to read and learn them. We can thus say, "That which we have seen and heard and handled;" and we seek the flower and perfection of these, not as *unknown*, though *unseen*.

It implies also, that *the things above are ours*. We may not set our hearts on that which is not ours; but these are ours. For, says St. Paul, "All things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Ce-

phas, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." From the loveliest flower that blooms on earth, to Him who gave it its tints and its perfume, all are ours. Christians are the only true land-lords and sea-lords of the universe; for all of it ministers to them. Wherever the snow falls, or the rivers run; wherever the firmament is hung with its drapery of clouds, or sown with stars; wherever man lives or God is, all is ours in the second Adam; and on all of these that are above, we may in him set our affections.

If we do not set our affections on things above, *we shall most assuredly set them upon things below.* Empty man's heart cannot be; its affections cannot stand alone; they must cling and cluster around an object of support; they must love and worship either God or an idol; the choice therefore is not whether you shall set your affections on things above or not, but whether you shall set them upon things above or on things below, on God or on an idol. We may also observe, that the only way to detach the affections from the love of things below, is to press upon them the beauty and the glory of things above; for an evil preference can only be dislodged by the appliance of a good one. The love of the one will ebb before the influx of the other. It is with this end in view that I proceed to delineate the excellency of "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

The things above are those amid which every Christian *must soon be placed for eternity*. It is his Father's house — the land of promise — the native realm of the soul; and surely it becomes the exiles and pilgrims of time, to visit on the wings of faith and hope those mansions of which they must soon be the glorified inhabitants. Let our hearts, then, precede us; let our affections pre-occupy the Heavenly Jerusalem: our treasure is there, our conversation is there, and the fulfilment of all our hopes will be realised there also.

Things above are alone *fitted and worthy to occupy a Christian's soul*. The immaterial spirit cannot be replenished with the things of time. It was made to hold communion with the things of God. It is a pilgrim indeed, but a Divine pilgrim on earth, chosen to be a denizen in heaven. It is royalty in rags. The element of its enlargement and enjoyment is above. Its nutriment is the hidden manna; its repose is in the bosom of God. Husks are for swine, but living bread for it. No house of clay, but a house not made with hands must be its home. "As the heart panteth for the water-brooks," so doth it pant for God.

Things above *have an overpassing and transcendent excellency*. The river there is the river of life, clear as crystal, and flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Its tree is the tree of life, whose fruit is for food, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. There is there no necessity for sun or moon or stars, for the Lord God

Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. Its crown is a crown of glory; its inheritance is incorruptible; its grandeur fadeth not away; its cedars are not gnawed by a worm; its robes are not injured by the moth; its gold is not covered with rust; its melodies have no intermingling minors; its days, like the hours of the dial, are measured by sunshine; and soon, if we are risen with Christ, the benedictions that rest upon our heads on earth shall bloom into diadems of beauty, and the dim lights of time shall burst into the emerald splendours of unutterable glory.

The things *above endure forever*. They are not only without alloy, but without decay. Even a little pleasure that lasts for years, is more precious than a greater that lasts for a day. Now everything above has struck upon it the superscription, "For ever." The sweetest joy is everlasting. It is an everlasting rest, "eternal in heaven;" "it fadeth not away." Here it is by incessant watchfulness we live; but there we need no watchfulness, for there is neither peril nor possibility of death. In this life the fairest flowers fade soonest; the more closely they are clasped, the more rapidly they die. The requiems of death follow fast on our evangels. But in heaven, there is a zodiac of joy, from which there shall be no outlet; an eternity of blessedness, of which there can be no suspension. God, the Fountain of all happiness, shall overflow all; and every atom of our souls shall lodge His glory, and

every portion of our nature shall be inlaid with His holiness.

In seeking and setting our affections on things above, *we are certain of success.* The things of the world are all uncertain. "The race is not always to the swift, nor the victory to the strong;" and uncertainty, it is well known, paralyses efforts that would otherwise be strenuous; whereas the assurance of success imparts impulse and energy to every hope, aspiration, and endeavour. While heavenly things are ours, in virtue of our being Christ's, yet it is not the less true, that they are only to be reached by "running the race set before us," "fighting the good fight," "striving," "asking," "seeking." "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved." But in the midst of all this, we are encouraged and sustained by the experience of Paul—"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we are incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."

The things above *become daily more and more important, and the things below grow daily less so.* Every day takes from the length of life, and from the lustre of earthly things, as it adds to the weight and importance of eternal and heavenly realities. The rising tide is rolling in, and the successive waves of an eternal sea swell and break upon the sands on which we now stand; and very soon what we call life shall be covered by the

bottomless and boundless ocean of eternity. But the glories and felicities of heaven cannot be washed away. They are above the tide-mark; they are not touched by the mutations of time. On these, therefore, fix your hearts; let these constitute your treasure, and in due time, the Eden-gate shall open on its hinge of harmony, and admit you to the possession of what you now aspire to.

The pursuit of things above will *cast down upon you a transforming beauty*. Man's heart never acts without being acted upon; contact with the good sanctifies; communion with the happy gladdens. The vibrations of a happy spirit are felt throughout the whole circle of its influence. How much more transforming and sanctifying must it be, to maintain uninterrupted contact with the glories and joys of heaven! There will thus flow into the soul the influx of the life of God; and as the light of day acts on the sensitive metal of the photographer, tracing out the objects from which it is radiated, even so the effulgence that falls from heaven on the soul of him who sets his affections on its objects, will transform him from glory to glory, replenish his spirit with the seed of unutterable joys, and, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, write on him the legible and indelible impress of God.

Certainly, the fuller our experience is of the things of this world, the less reason does there appear for our attachment to them. It is, at the

best, a dazzling masquerade. It is full of gay appearances, covering and concealing grim facts. Its pleasures have the evanescence without the purity of snow-flakes; and its sweetest associations are the shortest. Our ties on earth daily become fewer, while those in heaven multiply; week after week the sky shuts down upon fewer of those with whom we have "taken sweet counsel," and every year carries with it its harvest to God.

Seek these things *in Christ*. He is the compendium of them all. "In Him dwell all the treasures of wisdom." In Him you have a right to them. Through Him only you may reach them.

Seek them *in the Holy Scriptures*; these are the inventory that contains them. Its brilliant poetry; its touching eloquence; its powerful reasoning; its simple history, are all employed to set forth the excellence and glory of things above. It is a sea, whose floor is covered with pearls; and they that dive deepest and oftenest, will bring up the richest and most precious.

Seek them in the *ministry of the Gospel*. Every faithful minister is a star set on the firmament to reveal something of the lustre of things above. Were there no inherent energy in the living voice, reasoning with living men; had it no promised blessing; were it no ordinance of God; yet the variety it presents, in the mode of exhibiting the same truths, is calculated to freshen them to our

minds, or at least, to place them at a new angle from which they may be more vividly seen.

Seek them *on the Sabbath*. It is God's day; it is a short interval reclaimed from the world; an Eden in the desert; a Goshen in Egypt; a suspension of the wheels of time, in order that there may be heard the tones of an eternal jubilee, and seen, dimly it may be, the transalpine glories of the land that is afar off.

Seek them *in prayer*. "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened." Prayer moves the arm that moves the universe. He that gives the things, gives the heart to pray for them.

APPENDIX.

[THE following fragments of poetry are meant to illustrate and enforce some of the thoughts expressed in the previous parts of this work. Sentiments that fail to strike in the ordinary formulas of prose sometimes tell with great and enduring emphasis in the more brilliant imagery of the poet. It is for this reason, probably, that the richest consolations of the Spirit of God are presented to the Christian reader in the poetic books of the Old-Testament Scriptures. The rapt saint is almost always a poet; and deep and burning piety necessarily clothes itself with the richest resources of human speech.]

DEATH OF AN INFANT.

DEATH found strange beauty on that cherub brow,
And dashed it out. There was a tint of rose
On cheek and lip: — he touched the veins with ice,
And the rose faded. Forth from those blue eyes
There spake a wishful tenderness,— a doubt,
Whether to grieve or sleep,— which innocence
Alone can wear. With ruthless haste, he bound
The silken fringes of their curtaining lids
For ever. There had been a murmuring sound,
With which the babe would charm its mother's ear,
Charming her even to tears. The spoiler set
His seal of silence. But there beamed a smile
So fixed and holy, from that marble brow,—
Death gazed and left it there: — he dared not steal
The signet-ring of Heaven.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

ELEGY ON A BELOVED INFANT.

FARE thee well, thou lovely stranger !
Guardian angels take your charge,
Freed at once from pain and danger,
Happy spirit set at large.

Life's most bitter cup just tasting,
Short thy passage to the tomb,
O'er the barrier swiftly hasting,
To thine everlasting home.

Death, his victim still pursuing,
Ever to his purpose true,
Soon her placid cheek bedewing,
Robbed it of its rosy hue.

Sealed those eyes, so lately beaming
Innocence and joy so mild ;
Every look so full of meaning,
Seemed to endear the lovely child.

In the silent tomb we leave her,
Till the resurrection morn ;
When her Saviour will receive her,
And restore her lovely form.

Then, dear Lord, we hope to meet her
In thy happy courts above ;
There with heavenly joy to greet her,
And resound redeeming love !

ANONYMOUS.

THE DYING INFANT.

CEASE here longer to detain me,
Fondest mother, drowned in woe.
Now thy kind caresses pain me :
Morn advances — let me go.

See yon orient streak appearing,
Harbinger of endless day :
Hark ! a voice the darkness cheering,
Calls my new-born soul away.

Lately launched, a trembling stranger,
On the world's wild, boisterous flood,
Pierced with sorrow, tossed with danger
Gladly I return to God.

Now my cries shall cease to grieve thee,
Now my trembling heart finds rest ;
Kinder arms than thine receive me,
Softer pillow than thy breast.

Weep not o'er those eyes that languish,
Upward turning toward their home ;
Raptured, they'll forget all anguish,
While they wait to see thee come.

There, my mother, pleasures centre ;
Weeping, parting, care, or woe
Ne'er our Father's house shall enter :
Morn advances — let me go.

As through this calm, this holy dawning,
Silent glides my parting breath,
To an everlasting morning,
Gently close my eyes in death,

Blessings endless, richest blessings,
Pour their streams upon thine heart,
(Though no language yet possessing,)
Breathes my spirit ere we part.

Yet to leave thee sorrowing rends me,
Though again His voice I hear :
Rise ! may every grace attend thee ;
Rise ! and seek to meet me there.

CECIL.

THE DYING CHILD.

With sudden stroke,
The blooming infant faded and expired.
And soon its lovely sister, doubly dear
Now in their grief, was in like manner torn
From their united grasp. With patience far
Beyond her years, the little sufferer bore
Her sharp distemper, while she could behold
Both parents by her side ; but when from sleep,
Transient and troubled, waking, wept aloud,
As terrified if either were not there.
To hear their voices singing of the love
Of her Redeemer, in her favourite hymn,
And praying for his mercy, oft she asked
With eagerness, and seemed the while at ease.
When came the final struggle, with the look
Of a grieved child, and with its mournful cry,
But still with something of her wonted tone
Of confidence in danger, as for help,
She called on them, on both alternately,
As if by turns expecting that relief
From each the other had grown slow to yield ;
At which their calmness, undisturbed till then,
Gave way to agitation, past control.

A few heart-rending moments, and her voice
Sunk to a weak and inarticulate moan,
Then in a whisper ended; and, with that,
Her features grew composed and fixed in death!
At sight of which, their lost tranquillity,
At once returned. 'Twas evening; and the lamp,
Set near, shone full upon her placid face,
Its snowy white illuming, while they stood
Gazing, as on her loveliness in sleep,
The enfeebled mother on thy father's arm
Heavily hanging, like the slender flower
On its firm prop when loaded down with rain
Or morning dew.

WILCOX.

MATERNAL GRIEF

DEPARTED child! I could forget thee once,
Though at my bosom nursed; this woful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced,
By the returning substance, seen or touched,—
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
Absence and death, how differ they? and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed?
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
Or teach me calm submission to thy will.

WORDSWORTH.

THE END.

The Baptismal Font.

PREFATORY ADDRESS.



“Dost thou believe in Christ?” — John ix. 35.

THIS is probably the most important question that can be addressed to a responsible and rational being. I wish every reader of this treatise to *feel it so*. But who is Christ, it may be asked, that we should believe on him, and what are his claims to our deference? Let us read.

He is the only manifestation of God — the very brightness of his glory, in and through whom we may discover God. By him every attribute of God is brought within the horizon of our view, and on each there is shed down intense and unclouded light. He has come so near that we can distinctly see him, and yet remains so holy that we can see God in him.

Christ alone makes known God, not only as the absolute Deity, but *in his relationships* to us as “a just God and a Saviour.” A mere apocalypse of God is not all the fallen creature requires. It would meet our ignorance but not our fears. How shall man be justified before God? Is this clearly revealed God a reconciled God? He is. By Christ

we see God's attributes, not only in perfect harmony, as they have always been, but in perfect harmony around the sinner—his justice just while it justifies the unrighteous—his holiness holy while it receives sinners—his truth true while it executes not the curses of a broken law. This is the kernel of the gospel—its peculiar and distinctive and exclusive revelation. In him—our head and substitute and representative, suffering and acting in our behalf—mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

By Christ alone can we be saved:—"There is none other name given among men whereby we can be saved." All hopes therefore of absolute and uncovenanted mercy—all expectations of acquittal at the judgment-seat, and acceptance before God, by anything we are, or have suffered, or given, or done, are baseless—delusive—destructive. By *his righteousness alone* we are justified; by *his blood alone* we are cleansed; so much so, that not only no substitute, but no addition is tolerable. He must be alone or he will not be there at all.

By him alone peace and happiness and joy are realized. Faith in Christ is not the acceptance of a nauseous drug, essentially necessary if we desire to escape from eternal death; it is sweetness as well as safety. It is now rest in God, joy in the Holy Ghost, peace with God, the hope of glory.

To Christ, in these and other glorious offices, Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Priests, and Evangelists successively testified. Eve looked through

her tears, and, along the vista of many centuries, saw the true conqueror of the Serpent. Abraham beheld on Mount Moriah the sight of the cross, and predicted the appearance thereon of Christ our sacrifice. Moses spake of a Prophet like unto himself, and Jacob predicted, from his death-bed, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah till the Shiloh should come; and Balaam beheld from afar a star coming out of Jacob and a sceptre out of Israel. Job knew that his Redeemer lived, and David prophesied that his name would endure for ever. Isaiah announced the travail and the satisfaction of his soul, and Micah pointed out the place of his birth; and the last notes of the requiem of Levi, chanted by Malachi, melted into the evangelists proclaimed by the heavenly host.

But it may now be asked, *what is it to believe in Christ?* It is to rest upon his sacrifice, by faith, for righteousness and holiness and heaven. Faith looks at Christ *without*, not at anything *within* — off self and on Christ. It draws nothing from a cistern within, but all from a fountain without. There is nothing in it of a Narcissus nature. It has no strength, nor life, nor nutriment of its own. It is a parasite grace, feeding on Christ, rejoicing in Christ, living in Christ. It is a ceaseless absorbent, attracting and appropriating to itself whatever excellency it sees in the true vine to which it clings, and yet assuming none of the honour or the glory.

This faith in Christ does not terminate in Christ,

but mounts through Christ to God. He “died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” We “come to God through him.” In short, God is the home to which Christ brings the prodigal—the haven to which the Ark brings its company—the rest beyond which there is no necessity nor desire to go—the rock, reposing in the clefts of which, the believer hears the storms and tumults of the earth as the rock in the sea regards the cawing of the sea-birds above it.

Faith in Christ is just a sinner and the Saviour met or meeting. The want of the sinner is a Saviour, and the want of the Saviour is a sinner. A life-boat presupposes persons in the water—a physician patients—and a Saviour sinners.

Young man, dost thou believe in Christ? Youth is eminently your season. The heart is softest, impulse is easiest, and impressions are the deepest. There are no carking cares, no corrosive anxieties. It is *your hour*. You will never be more welcome, never more able. Spring gives its complexion to summer and autumn, and youth to age. “They that seek me early shall find me.” “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” Life is precarious. Death is more certain than age. Religion will cast a new beauty on your character, expanding what is contracted, elevating what is low, and purifying what is polluted. But should any turn a deaf ear to these the suggestions of true wisdom, to them we would address the words, “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy

heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Aged man, dost thou believe in Christ? To you, the question is emphatically momentous. The twilight envelopes you; the shadows of departed years lie long and deep over many a rood around you. Have you never thought of this question? Is your mind not made up upon its weight and importance? Is there only guilt behind and gloom before you? Is your retrospect a desert, and your prospect death? Yet even to you it may be said, "Now is the accepted time;" the twelfth hour has not yet sounded, but the eleventh has. A short hour remains. Steadily and in spite of all resistance the hour-hand of time advances in its course, and the epochal hour will sound which terminates your opportunities on earth, and the last echoes of it shall mingle with the tread of your footsteps at the judgment-seat.

Afflicted one, dost thou believe in Christ? The waters of Marah have filled your cup, and must have been bitter indeed if there have been no branch to sweeten them. Your acres have been sown with graves and your trees have been cypresses, and your merriest melodies have been plaintive minors, and the brightest scenery that has reached you has been refracted through your tears. Perhaps your earthly possessions have taken wings, as if tired of your company, and fled. Perhaps

those you cherished have been quenched by your hearth, and, with Job, you are ready to curse the day in which it was said, "There is a man-child born." But there is balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there. He has come to bind up the broken heart, to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." — "Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." — "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

Prosperous and wealthy man, dost thou believe in Christ? You are surrounded with the comforts and enjoyments of life; do these lead you to forget God? Unsanctified riches are thorns to the soul. They do not profit in the day of wrath. They have kept many from believing in the gospel; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches have often intercepted from the heart every heavenly influence. You must be torn from them, or they will be torn from you. You are poor indeed if you have no more abiding treasure, and miserable indeed if your heart is wholly set upon them; for he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with

increase. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you will have that principle of action which will teach you to use the world as not abusing it, for the fashion of it speedily passeth away.

Professing member of the visible church, dost thou believe in Christ? You are baptized; you approach the communion-table; you are treated as a true Christian; but it is a light thing to be judged of man—God searcheth the heart. To the Corinthian professors Paul said, “examine yourselves;” to the Hebrews he said, “take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart in departing from the living God;” — “all are not Israel who are of Israel;” — “he is not a Jew who is one outwardly.” Some will carry their deception to the judgment-day, professing “Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence, and in thy name done many marvellous works?” and will be startled and surprised at the unexpected reply, “Depart from me, I know you not.” “Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Christian, dost thou believe in Christ? Your reply is, “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” — “I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” You are born again—turned from darkness unto light—justified and sanctified—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and fellow-citizens with the saints

—“a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, the lights of the world, and salt of the earth.” If I address such, you will feel the truth of what I now state; your change is not of works, nor of merit, nor of man. No earthly ingenuity or imperial power, no royal lineage or noble rank, ever made or can make a Christian: no rite, or ceremony, or sacrament, or church, or priest, ever turned a man from darkness to light, or from the power of Satan unto God. Therefore, glory neither in Apollos, nor Paul, nor Cephas. “By grace ye are saved.” “It is God that justifieth.” He hath chosen us in Christ. We are his workmanship. Grace hath made us to differ. Let the 103rd Psalm be your song while you review the past, and the 23rd your hope when you look into the future.

Show forth the power of the Gospel in your walk and conversation in the world. “If we say we have fellowship with Christ and walk in darkness, we lie.” While there is no life on earth absolutely immaculate, yet the predominating bias of a true Christian’s walk, is holiness: “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

Especially, let its cheering and tranquillizing power break forth and shine from your character at whatever angle it may be beheld. Jeremiah sung psalms in the dungeon; Luther translated the Bible in prison; John beheld the brightest visions of the New Jerusalem in Patmos; Bunyan, in later

days, composed his Pilgrim in confinement, the prison cell acting to his mind as a camera-lucida, bringing within the horizon of his view pilgrims, each with his staff, and his face towards Zion, and conquerors, each throned and crowned with robes and palms of victory. There is a very impressive power in Christian happiness on those who see it from without. It is sunshine amid dripping clouds—a Sabbath heart in a week-day body, and Sabbath speech amid the dialects of Babel. It is brightest when all around it is blackest. When our natural affections cease their music, we then hear, sung out of the sky, unutterable melodies, which “ear hath not heard;” when the world is all gloom, a regenerated soul treads glories out of every pebble, and sees the stars as the arteries along which pulsations of felicity reach him. He can say with Habakkuk, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

But no doubt there are some who must reply to the text in the negative. Into such hands this little work may fall. With these I do not enter into any discussion. I merely submit a few thoughts which must occur to every reader.

Very great men have believed in Christ after close and protracted scrutiny. This, I admit, is

not evidence; but it at least shows that the faith which Newton and Locke and Bacon and Milton and Sir William Jones believed, on what they deemed satisfactory evidence, to be from God, cannot be wholly destitute of credentials. And this may lead any sceptical young man to doubt the vigour of his own judgment and the correctness of his reasoning, rather than the inspiration of Scripture. At the very least, this consideration will suggest the expediency of a long pause before there be uttered the loud croakings of a self-sufficient scepticism.

Not a few have died publicly and awfully as martyrs rather than repudiate or doubt what they believed to be of God. In fact, there is not a precept, a promise, or privilege, which has not been written in martyrs' blood and illuminated by the faggot flame. Meek-hearted men have shed their blood as festal wine, without one moment's doubt of reaching the shores to which the gospel points, and on which it lies an everlasting Aurora. This is not evidence of the truth of the Bible. It proves, however, that not only great men, but sincere men have embraced its sentiments and died rejoicing in its light.

Christianity has also taken a very powerful hold of universal society. We may trace its presence on the brow of every century and on the face of every acre of the earth. The paintings of the most celebrated masters, Rubens, Vandyke, Titian, are all radiant with its light. The poetry of Milton,

Tasso, Cowper, are vocal with its eloquence; and the master-pieces of sculpture are the efforts of the chisel to fix and embody its sublime truths. There is no tongue in which its voice is not heard, no literature of which it is not the warp and woof. Its great charter—the Bible, has been unrolled in every land; it is in cottages and palaces; it sails in the merchant's bark, and in the nation's navy. It may be found in the cabinets of princes, and in the pedler's pack. Its blessing is uttered at our nuptials, and its requiem is breathed over our graves. It is the treasury which supplies names to our children, eloquence to our sermons, and unction to our prayers. The sun never sets on its glorious page. Such a book it is hard to believe to be a fable—such a religion is surely no fancy. A lie could not have spread without force, convinced the most enlightened and moulded the whole body of society.

It has done all this too in spite of incessant opposition. But its assailants, it may be demonstrated, have not been generally good men. Every weapon that learning could snatch from the arsenals of the past, or science discover, or wit invent, or sarcasm supply, have been hurled against it, but not a stone has fallen from its glorious arch.

Infidels have died wretchedly, Christians never. Voltaire in his last moments cursed the day of his birth—Paine died blaspheming—Mirabeau calling for more opium—Hume amid affected jokes. Stephen died also, but praying for his enemies.

“Let me die the death of the righteous.” It does seem to me that a blind mind or a bad heart must be at the root of scepticism: for the longer I examine the truths of the Gospel, the more lustrous with a supernal glory do they appear to me; and the more minutely I weigh all that has been urged against its doctrines, the more sublimely do they stand out above and beyond all changes of time in their own eternal relief. I cannot but hail the Gospel as a blessing—an inestimable blessing—a shower of blessings. It sets no limits to reason but truth—none to affection but love—none to desire but duty—none to hope but infinitude. It condemns nothing but sin, and interdicts nothing but poison. Its creed is truth—its service love—its *alpha* and its *omega* the Lamb slain. Reader, “Dost thou believe?” Can you say, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

And let me now, in conclusion, ask you, my dear friends—Have you any personal acquaintance with Christ, as your Saviour? Can your solemn and sequestered moments witness at the judgment-seat of Christ that many a prayer has arisen from your hearts for mercy and forgiveness? Can your closet testify that you have there bowed the knee, and in deep and unspeakable earnestness pleaded for forgiveness of sin? Have you ever felt your soul to be a charge too precious for one moment to be forgotten, and the Saviour too glorious for one instant to be slighted? Have you ever felt what is the anxiety—the intense

anxiety—embodied in that question, “What must I do to be saved?” Time is rapidly passing away; the great ocean of eternity beats upon the shore of time, and threatens to cover it every moment; “we know not what a day may bring forth;” the healthiest and the happiest amongst us, ere another sun shall rise, may stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. Were that summons to come now, were that heart to give its last beat now, were that soul to be separated from that body, let me ask you — not separating myself from you, or my responsibility from yours — Should we be happy? Should we be saved? Would the judgment-seat be the vestibule of everlasting glory?

THE
BAPTISMAL FONT.

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CHAPTER I.

THERE is every reason to believe that the practice of baptism as an initiatory rite is older than the days of the Apostles, and the Christian era, technically so called. Learned Rabbis, among the Jews, profess to trace it upward to the times of Moses. It would appear to have been understood, not as a novel, but a well-known rite by the Pharisees in the days of John the Baptist, when they asked him not, "What meanest thou by this rite?" but, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" — John i. 25.

Christian baptism was instituted by our blessed Lord after his resurrection, and prior to his ascension, when He gave the commission, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and from that day to this it has been solemnized in every section of the Christian

Church. The following are the chief passages of the New Testament which relate to baptism.

1. It was practised by John the Baptist, as is proved by the following texts: "Then went out to John Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."—Matt. iii. 5—12. "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not."—John i. 26. "And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized."—John iii. 23. "When

John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." — Acts xiii. 24. Then said Paul, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." — Acts xix. 4.

2. It was appointed by our Lord as a Christian sacrament. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." — Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

3. Baptism is set forth as an emblem of the new birth or regeneration of heart, in Ephes. v. 26, 27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." In Titus iii. 5, "Not by words of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and it is sought by some in John iii. 6: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

4. It is also set forth as a sign of dying and

living with Christ in Coloss ii. 12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," and in Rom. vi. 3, 4: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

5. Faith is necessary to the profitable enjoyment and realization of the benefits of it as a sign and seal. Acts viii. 37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts xix. 4, 5: "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

6. It is associated with, but it is neither the cause nor the instrument of, forgiveness of sins. Acts ii. 38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts xxii. 16: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

7. There is but one baptism. Ephes. iv. 5:

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” It is thus represented as one of the seven marks of Christian unity. See also 1 Cor. xii. 13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Galat. iii. 28, 29: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

8. It was in the apostolic age administered to individuals. Acts viii. 12: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts xiii. 38: “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” Acts ix. 18: “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.”

9. It was also administered to whole families. Acts x. 47, 48; xvi. 15; and 1 Cor. i. 16.

10. It was typified in the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. 1 Cor. x. 1—4; also by the deluge, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

## CHAPTER II.

## PERPETUITY OF BAPTISM.

A PARTY has been formed in the latter years of the history of the Christian Church, who deny that it was the mind of our Lord to perpetuate the outward and visible baptism with water in the Church. In opposition to this notion, we allege, and on grounds that seem perfectly conclusive, that, like the holy Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, it was meant to be celebrated till Christ come the second time.

The most satisfactory proof that our Lord designed baptism with water to be continued, is the ascertained practice of the Apostles. Let any one read the accounts given in the Acts, of the baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip, or of Cornelius by Peter, or of Lydia and her family, and it will be apparent that the outward rite was administered; and if so, what warrant or authority had the Apostles for so doing, except the commission of their Lord? And if they thus acted on that commission, they show in so doing that they attached to his words their literal and natural import. It seems in fact to be clearly deducible from Holy Scripture, that baptism was designed to be perpetuated in the Christian Church till the close of this dispensation.

1. We have the express command of our Lord, "Go, and baptize all nations," and this command is accompanied with a promise which proves the perpetuity of this sacrament: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit was not meant to supersede, but to be the right to baptism with water, for it was after this gift of the Spirit, that the Apostles went into all the world preaching the gospel, and baptizing in the name of Jesus; and Cornelius was baptized expressly on the ground that he had received the Holy Spirit.

2. We may infer the perpetuity of this sacrament from its nature and significance. It is the door of access to the visible church. As a society separate from the world, there must be some visible sign and seal of that separation. Baptism seems to be the appointed symbol of entrance into the outward profession of the Gospel, pointing to a higher and holier separation in heart and spirit, without which all external ceremonies and sacraments are only more oppressive elements of ruin—more awful sources of responsibility.

3. Circumcision continued in the Jewish Church till Christ's first advent, and we may expect that baptism will continue till his second. He that instituted it can alone repeal it. Nor is there any ground for desiring its extinction. Unlike the rites of Levi, it is easy of celebration in every climate, and at every period of life. As simple in its ritual as it is sublime in its significance, it commends it-

self on the ground of a beautiful expediency, as well as on that of divine obligation.

4. It ought not to be needlessly put off by Christian parents. It is to be feared that many in their recoil from the opposite extreme of superstitious idolatry, rush into the other of contemptuous and irreverent neglect. This neglect seems to argue indifference to the express commandments of Christ — a practical undervaluing of the privileges and rights of their infants, and a trifling with one solemn sacrament which they do not exhibit in their views and estimate of the other.

5. On the other hand, parents must guard against the superstitious feeling which prompts the belief, that should an infant die without baptism, that infant is lost. If the parent is guilty of culpable neglect, the sickness of his infant should remind him of his responsibilities; but to run at midnight in order to get baptism for a *dying* infant is scarcely required. Its administration pre-supposes the probability of life. It is a badge for the church militant, not for the church triumphant; and if the infant be obviously entering the latter, it possesses a surer and more glorious title than any minister can bestow.

## CHAPTER III.

## NATURE AND MEANING OF BAPTISM.

It is a public and visible token from God, that to faith he will and does bestow all the pledged and promised blessings of the covenant of grace. It is a declaration on the part of the baptized, that as his body requires to be and is cleansed by water, his soul needs and seeks to be renewed by the Spirit of God; that as the body-purifying element, water, is sprinkled on its subject the outward man, so the soul-purifying power, the Holy Ghost, must be poured down upon its subject the heart, before it can become holy; and that as the visible ambassador in the visible church ministers this visible act thus significant, and thereby receives the individual into the visible church, so is it his desire, and by submission to this rite, his strong faith, that the Lord Jesus, the unseen High Priest, of the inner and spiritual church, will pour down his Holy Spirit on his soul, and baptize it with that transforming power which is sacramentally set forth to all, but really and truly received and realized by them alone who believe with the heart

in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. But it is not only a symbolic, but also a sealing rite. A seal attached to a deed or document among men is in itself as worthless as any other piece of sealing-wax, but as being the recognised and authentic seal of one of the parties, it is a lasting token and assurance to all concerned, that he will make good all the covenants, agreements, and promises in the document to which it is affixed, on the specified conditions and limitations. Such is baptism on God's part. It is a seal given by him — a token struck with his superscription, whereby every promise he has given, he thus visibly pledges himself to bestow on all that will ; and therefore every time we witness baptism, we see applied afresh the sacred seal of the everlasting God, to confirm and strengthen our faith and reliance on His gracious promises. As often as we witness this sacrament administered, the faith of the true believer hears breathed through it, as through the trumpet of Jubilee, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean : from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you ; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall do them."

3. Our submitting to it — and in order thus to submit, we either receive baptism in riper years, or refer to, and acquiesce in our reception of it in infancy — is our profession of our belief in the truth and preciousness of God's blessed promises, and our personal desire to reap their fruits; or the assertion of our personal and actual enjoyment of them. The infant in after years is called upon to take a retrospective view of the sacrament in which, and of the solemn occasion on which, he was entered into federal relation to God — introduced into the outward fellowship of the saints of God, constituted a member of the visible catholic Church, and separated like the Nazarite from the world, and set apart for God. He may renounce his baptism by an open and entire rejection of Christianity, and in this apostasy, if such it may be justly called, he may make up his mind to meet the Judge of the quick and the dead; but until he thus abjure the faith of the Gospel, and reject the act of his parents, he is the subject of all the responsibilities and obligations of that dedication. It were the nobler and the more happy retrospect which would lead him to glory in the name of Jehovah into which he was baptized, to retake up with gratitude the duties devolved on him, and in life to illustrate and in death to hold fast that holy religion which reveals in heaven love, on earth peace, and in eternity to come the hopes of an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

4. It is true the Holy Spirit alone can enable the baptized to make baptism in his own case anything better than a source of responsibility. But to them that ask, this inestimable gift is promised. The baptized may thus plead at the throne of the heavenly grace: "O Lord, we see resting on us very heavy responsibilities. Thy name has been named upon us, and to thy service we have been dedicated in our infancy. May it please thee to give us thy Holy Spirit; to pour down upon us grace and strength from thy sanctuary. Make us in heart thine. Regenerate, renew, and sanctify us wholly. May we be inwardly and outwardly thine."

## CHAPTER IV.

## BAPTISM NOT NECESSARILY REGENERATION.

1. WHILE we do not depreciate baptism into a vapid ceremonial on the one hand, we must guard against raising it to the place of the Spirit of God on the other. This last is, we fear, the dilating heresy of the age. Transubstantiation puts the eucharistic bread and wine in the room of Christ, and Baptismal Regeneration, or a change of heart necessarily associated with this sacrament, places the water in the font in the room of the Holy Spirit. To attribute essentially quickening attributes to either sacrament is simply idolatry. It is also to forget or overlook the extent of man's ruin. By nature the soul is not sick or in a swoon; for, if this be all, human restoratives and priestly rites may restore it: but it is dead, absolutely and utterly dead; and therefore nothing but Omnipotence in its sovereignty can vivify and raise it.

2. That baptism is not regeneration will be apparent if we consider who is declared in Scripture to be the author of regeneration. In John i. 12, 13, we thus read: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, who were

born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

If regeneration take place in baptism, then the "will of man" does determine the birth of the sons of God. The father may fix the hour and the place of the regeneration of his infant, and the unbaptized adult may, by the "will of man" and the "will of flesh," resolve to be born again at any time he prefers.

3. But is it not written in the same gospel, (John iii. 5,) "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?*"

Is it probable that this passage refers to Christian baptism, seeing it was not yet instituted and could not be understood by Nicodemus? If it be said it refers to the baptism of John the Baptist, we reply, it cannot mean that John's baptism was regeneration; for it was so imperfect that those who had received it were baptized again in the name of Jesus, as it is recorded in Acts xix. 3—5: "And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

But should we grant that it refers to Christian baptism, it does not prove that the water in the font quickens the dead. If the words had been,

“Except ye be born of water, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,” the doctrine we oppose might have been grafted on it. But the words are “born of water,” that is the minister’s part, “and of the Spirit,” that is his Master’s; the one is introduction into the outward and visible church by a visible rite, and the other is incorporation into the inner and spiritual church, which is made up exclusively of the sons of God, by the Holy Spirit, when and where He pleases; for “the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every man that is born of the Spirit.”

In the contiguous texts “water” is left out, and “born of God” and “born of the Spirit,” are the expressions employed by our Lord. The process also by which the life of God is imparted to the soul is expressly declared to be faith in the Son of God. As the wounded Israelite (v. 14) looked at the brazen serpent and derived health to his body, so the sinner looks by faith to the uplifted Saviour and from him receives eternal life.

But it seems to me that the conjunction *και* (*and*) is here used in its not uncommon sense of “even,” and if so, “water” is used as the sign or symbol of the Holy Spirit,—the standing metaphor in many parts of Scripture for the Spirit, and plainly in John vii. 37: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He

that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit," &c.

4. It will also appear that baptism is not the new birth, if we consult Scripture concerning the instrumentality by which this great change is declared invariably to be accomplished. It is by "the word." John xvii. 17: "Sanctify them. *through thy truth*, thy word is truth." James i. 18: "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth*." 1 Peter i. 22, 23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*." 1 Cor. iv. 15; "In Christ Jesus have I begotten you *through the gospel*." If this last statement of the Apostle be compared with his language in 1 Cor. i. 14, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius," we shall see that Paul did not regard baptism as that life-imparting ordinance which some believe it to be in the present age. Ephesians v. 26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the word*." Titus iii. 4—6: "But after the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which (Holy Ghost) he poured out richly on us *through Jesus Christ*."

It may be that in these two last passages bap-

tism is referred to—and its importance and obligation, as the initiatory sacrament of the church, it is neither right nor necessary to depreciate—but in both, the language employed is so guarded, that, in the first, “the word” is seen to be the instrumentality, and in the second, the Holy Ghost is declared to be the author, and Jesus Christ the medium, or mediatorial channel of both.

5. We may also show that baptism is not the new birth, by reviewing the moral effects of that birth as they are set forth in the Scriptures. Those who have received it “are alive to God,” “quickened,” “a new creature,” “children of God,” having “the spirit of adoption, saying, Abba, Father.” “Whoso is born of God doth not commit sin.” “Every one that loveth is born of God.” “Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.” “Obedient children.” “Peacemakers.”—These are not the characteristics of every baptized man. It is, therefore, matter of *fact*, and of daily observation, that baptism is not this transformation of nature—this new and heavenly birth—the harbinger or prolific parent of these holy and heavenly fruits which adorn the character of saints, and shed beauty and fragrance on the world in which they are pilgrims.

6. The new birth, or regeneration, is also described in Scripture as an indestructible character destined to issue and unfold itself in heaven. The wheat and the tares grow together in the one field of the visible church, till the time of the harvest—there is no transformation of the one into the other.

“Depart from me,” — not “I knew you once, but now have ceased to know you,” but — “I never knew you.” “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.” “They that are born of God overcome the world.” “Being confident of this, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it to the day of Jesus Christ.” “All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me.” “This is the Father’s will, that of all he has given me I should lose none. “According as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy.” — Ephes. i. 4, “Begotten again into a lively hope to an inheritance incorruptible — reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” — 1 Pet. i. 3. All these very familiar texts clearly demonstrate that regeneration is not a temporary and mutable character, but a new and immutable nature, destined to endless progression, and never reverting or relapsing into the dark and corrupt state out of which it emanated. The shining light, brightening from grey dawn to noon day — the acorn, rising and spreading into the gigantic oak — the infant, growing up to manhood, are its types, and hence to speak, baptism being all this, is to contradict facts, and to dispute the evidence of the senses.

7. In those cases of (necessarily) adult baptism recorded in the Acts, regeneration is represented in every instance as *preceding* baptism, and in such

cases be what baptism may, it cannot be the instrument of regeneration. In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, we find Philip stating the pre-requisite of baptism in the case of adults, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest be baptized." — Acts viii. 37. "Can any man," said Peter, "forbid water that these should be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" — Acts x. 47. The jailer of Philippi first "believed on Christ with all his house," and was "baptized, he and his straightway." In these instances baptism was a seal of existing grace, not a producer of a new grace.

8. The fruits of regeneration are not found in all the baptized. But if this sacrament makes "the thorn the fir-tree, and the brier the myrtle-tree," the fruit will show it. The good tree cannot bear bad fruit. In the second chapter of Ephesians we have the contrast. The unregenerate are therein described as "walking according to the course of this world;" "having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh;" "fulfilling the desires of the flesh;" "children of wrath;" "dead in trespasses and sins;" "aliens, strangers, having no hope, and without God in the world." But do not many or all of these dark characteristics appear among the baptized? The features of the regenerate, on the other hand, are represented as "quickened with Christ;" "God's workmanship created unto good works;" "saved by grace;" "made nigh by the blood of Christ;" "fellow-citizens with the saints;"

“a holy temple;” “a habitation of God;” “having access through Christ by one Spirit to the Father.” Are these the features of all or of a majority of the baptized? Are all the baptized the sons of God by adoption? Have all such the spirit which prompts the utterance “Abba, Father?” A “Simon Magus,” is one ready and conclusive reply.

9. The teaching which identifies regeneration of heart with baptism is fraught, it is to be feared, with grave and ruinous evils. It makes a *work*, not *faith*, the instrument of justification—it puts a material element, water, in the room of the Holy Spirit, just as transubstantiation puts bread in the room of Christ; and in practice it fosters the most deadly delusions. How many may have gone to the eternal state relying on an outward rite as their *only* of *this* cover their fatal delusion at the judgment-seat, it is not for me to state. But beyond all question, there is no teaching more calculated in the present day to welcome and encourage the principles and the progress of Romanism than that which places a sacrament, however precious in its own place, in the room of the Holy Spirit of God. I look upon this as heresy, as bearing the same relation to baptism which transubstantiation bears to the Lord’s Supper, and, perhaps, the more perilous of the two.

## CHAPTER V.

## SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. ALL are agreed that baptism is to be administered to believing adults, the previous baptism of the Holy Ghost not superseding, but warranting and demanding the baptism of the church with water. To urge the possession of the first as rendering unnecessary the second, is totally alien to the spirit, usages, and prescriptions of a faith, which insists indeed on the internal grace as the chief thing, but at the same time requires its outward exhibition as its natural and *ultrae* expression. The administration of this sacrament with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is so clearly enjoined, and was so incontrovertibly practised by the Apostles, that it seems needless to recapitulate the evidence here.

2. A dispute, however, of a different description, has agitated the Christian Church. One party allege that infants are neither the scriptural nor capable subjects of baptism, and that the administration of the holy rite to such, is not only invalid, but must be reiterated. This is a new opinion. It is not held by very many. But it would be uncandid to withhold the fact, that truly pious and spiritual men, such as Fuller, and Carey, and Hall,

and Carson, have not only conscientiously held it, but defended it acutely and plausibly.

3. It is surely a presumption against their views, and a very strong one too, that from the very beginning of God's intercourse with his church on earth, he has included, almost invariably, the children in his covenants with the parents. Thus, in addressing Noah, God said, "Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark, for *thee* have I seen righteous." This language is very remarkable. "*Thee* have I seen righteous," therefore, come, not only "thou." but "all thy house." The privilege inherited by the father in consequence of his personal piety, is made the ground of comprehending in the enjoyment of these privileges all his house. Does it not seem, to say the least, to be in the spirit of this dealing, to admit the children into the visible church on the ground that their parents have been previously admitted and now profess to belong to it.

In Genesis xvii. 7, God says to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant with *thee* and *thy seed after thee*, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee—every man-child among you shall be circumcised." That this circumcision occupied in the Levitical dispensation, the place of baptism under the Evangelical, must be apparent from its being the outward and visible sign of the same inward and spiritual grace, as it is stated in Deut. xxx. 6: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy

God with all thine heart.” And in Galatians iii. 27—29, there is most satisfactory proof, from the extension of the privilege to females as well as males, that the Apostle views baptism as evangelical circumcision, just as circumcision was Levitical baptism. “For as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s then are *ye Abraham’s seed*, and heirs according to the promise.”

4. The language of the New Testament seems also very explicit. Acts ii. 38: “Then Peter said unto them, Arise and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you *and your children*, and to all that are afar off.”

Matthew xvii. 5: “Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

1 Cor. vii. 14: “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;” that is, the children are scripturally “set apart or separated,” which is the strict meaning of *ἀγιοι*, especially as contrasted with *ακαθαρα*. There is also the Saviour’s commission in Matt. xxviii. 19: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." On this text it is important to observe that there are two distinct words, each translated *teach* in our version, but one totally distinct from the other in the original language. The first clause ought to be rendered, "Go and *disciple* all nations, baptizing," &c., or, "Go and make disciples of all nations." How? First, "by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and, secondly and *subsequently*, by "teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Baptism is the initiatory rite, and teaching the duty that flows from it, and is one of the chief obligations arising out of this sacrament.

That infants as well as adults were comprehended in "all nations," every one of the Apostles, originally Jews, would doubtless believe—reasoning, naturally enough, if our infants were admitted by an outward rite to the privileges of the gospel, in its typical and less fully developed dispensation, they will surely, and *a fortiori*, be admitted into the same privileges, only greater, more numerous and lustrous, under the perfect light of the New Testament. The *rite* is changed, the *privilege* remains—the *ceremony* is altered, but the *substance* continues. Circumcision introduced into the Jewish Church, and baptism introduces into the Christian, while in this alteration, the ampler

range of the Christian dispensation is shown, in that the admission is no longer restricted primarily to Jews and males, but extended to Gentiles and females, as indicated in Galatians iii. 27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So natural is this, that they who deny infants their accustomed privileges, the privileges of 2000 years before the birth of Jesus, not they who accord them, are bound to prove their positions.

The Christian is not a totally different dispensation from the Jewish. It is the full development of it—the flower and perfection of it. "The righteousness of faith" is the same now as it was 4000 years ago, and the *formula* only by which it was sealed and signified in the days of Abraham is changed. In Colossians ii. 11, the Apostle plainly intimates their identity. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the *circumcision* made without hands, in putting of the body of the sins of the flesh by the *circumcision* of Christ: buried with him in *baptism*." Circumcision proclaimed the depravity of our natures—it bound the parent to teach the child—it marked off the children of the visible church from those who were aliens, and it taught its subjects to look up to Him who instituted it for grace and glory. The sign or seal of all this was struck on the infants of the people of God for 2000 years. Where, we ask, is the repeal of this? When, and by whom were children proscribed and excommunicated? By

whom were babes cast out of the temple? To answer, "Adults were baptized by the apostles," looks like evasion. These are baptized now, if not previously baptized in infancy. What we allege is, there is no *arrest* intimated in the New Testament on the flow of the privileges enjoyed in the Old. They are extended in every case, and contracted in none. The denial of baptism to infants seems therefore sectarian—a restriction, not an extension of gracious privileges.

5. In the New Testament there are several instances of whole families being baptized; and in thirteen families, the number so baptized, there must surely have been some infants. Lydia and her family—the gaoler of Philippi and his family—Cornelius and his family—Crispus and his family—Stephanus and his family—Aristobulus, Narcissus, Onesiphorus, Priscilla, Nymphas, Philemon, with their families were all baptized; the *ground* of baptism of the family being laid down as the *faith* of the parent; and thus it must be obvious, when we consider, in connexion with it, the law and usage of circumcision, that children must have been admitted to Christian baptism. The Greek word generally translated *family*, means distinctively *children*, and not servants or domestics only. We assert that the apostolic usage was the baptism of the children, immediately after the baptism of the parents; and in proof of this we have quoted twelve New Testament instances which directly involve infant baptism. The Baptists do not ec-

clesiastically recognise the *family* in the ministration of this sacrament. They look to the *individual* only; and in so far they depart from apostolic precedent and practice. In 1 Cor. x. 2, also, we read that the Israelites were *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. In that nation at least *one third* were children.

6. If we refer to the ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the earlier fathers, we shall find in them indubitable evidence that children were, without controversy, and without opposition from any quarter, admitted to Christian baptism. JUSTIN MARTYR, who lived about the middle of the second century, και πολλοί τίνες και πολλὰ ἐξηκοντουνται και εβδομηκοντουνται οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν εμαθήτευθησαν τῷ Χριστῷ ἀφθοροὶ διαμεινούσι. Apol. p. 48.

“Many, male and female, with us now sixty and seventy years old, *who were made disciples to Christ from childhood*, and who remain celibates.”

The original word μαθητευσέιν, to make disciples, is that employed by our Lord in his commission, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing,” &c.

The work in which Justin quotes this fact was written about the year 150. These persons then, who were at that date seventy years of age, must have been baptized about A.D. 80, and therefore while one or more of the Apostles were living. This is a very plain testimony. IRENÆUS, who was for a while the contemporary of Justin, using the word regeneration for baptism, according to the

practice of the post-apostolic fathers, says, “Omne enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam qui per eum renascuntur in Deum; infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores.” Iren. adv. Hær. lib. ii. c. 39. “Our Lord came to save all through himself; all, I say, who through him are born again unto God, *infants* and *children*, and boys and youths.” TERTULLIAN, who was contemporary with Irenæus, clearly attests the fact of infant baptism; while he contends for deferring it, not on the ground that infants were not then baptized, but, on very erroneous ground, we allow, that it was less responsibility to those who were their sponsors. He says, “Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione etiam etate cunctatio baptismi utilior præcipue tamen circa parvulos. Quid enim necesse est sponsores etiam periculo ingeri qui et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt et proventu malæ indolis falli.”—Tertul. de Baptismo, Oper. p. 710. “According to the condition and the situation, and also the age of each person, the deferring of baptism is more useful; but this remark particularly applies to the case of infants. For why need any risk be incurred by their sponsors, who themselves may not be able, by reason of death, to fulfil their baptismal promises, or who may be deceived by the development of a bad disposition in their charge?”

CYPRIAN, who lived about fifty years after Tertullian, gives an equally express testimony to this practice. “Ceterum si homines impedire aliquod,

ad consecutionem gratiæ possit; magis adultos et provectos et majores natu possunt impedire peccata graviora. Porro autem si etiam gravissimis delictoribus et in Deum multum ante peccantibus, cum postea crediderint remissa peccatorum datur et baptismo atque a gratia, nemo prohibetur quanto majus prohiberi non debet infans qui recens natus nihil peccavit nisi, quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquæ prima nativitate contraxit.”—Cyp. vol. ii. Epist. 64. “But if anything might impede men in the attainment of grace, surely the more grievous sins might impede adults and more aged persons. Moreover, if the remission of sins is granted even to the greatest transgressors on their subsequent belief, and no one is prohibited from baptism and from grace, *how much less ought an infant to be prohibited*, who, recently born, has not sinned, except in so far as, being naturally descended from Adam, he has contracted the contagion of ancient death in his first birth?”

In a council held at Carthage in the year 256, FIDUS, one of sixty-six ministers who were present, asked the question, whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old; and all decided that there was no restriction as to the number of days, obviously, however, taking it for granted that infant baptism was the usage and not an innovation.

AMBROSE, in his lecture on Luke i. 17, says:

“In the Apostles’ time infants were baptized, as well as in our own.”

CHRYSOSTOM frequently refers to infant baptism, as the general practice. But let any one read the sixth book of AUGUSTINE against Pelagius, and he will see that Augustine argues against Pelagius, and in proof of original sin, from the fact—which his adversaries did not dispute or deny—that infants were in his day and had been all along baptized. In chap. iii. sec. 7, he says: “Frustra omnino contenditis nec ab originali peccato parvulos regeneratione mundari. Non hoc ostendit qui dixit quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo, in morte ejus baptizati sumus. . . . Si ergo in Christo parvuli baptizantur, in morte ejus baptizantur.”

In the same book, chap. v. sect. 12, he says: “Hic itaque agnoscamus et parvulos quia et ipsos baptizatos non negamus in Christo.”

In section 13 he thus argues with his Pelagian opponents: “Aut ergo agnosceite parvulos in baptismo mortuos esse peccato et fatemini habuisse cui morerentur originale peccatum aut aperte dicite non eos in morte Christi baptizatos cum baptizarentur in Christo et Apostolum mendacii redarguite dicentem quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Jesu in morte illius baptizati sumus.”—“In vain do ye contend that children are not cleansed from original sin by regeneration. He did not show this who said, ‘As many as have been baptized in Christ have been baptized in (or into) his death.’ If therefore little children are baptized they are

baptized in his death.” “Here also let us *acknowledge even little children*, because we do not deny that they are baptized in Christ.” “Either therefore admit that little children in baptism are dead in sin, and confess that they had original sin, by which they might die; or openly confess that they are not baptized into the death of Christ when they are baptized into Christ; and thus prove the Apostle guilty of falsehood when he says, ‘As many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death.’”

It is evident that throughout the whole of his sixth book, Augustine, justly or unjustly, proves the existence of original sin, from the fact that in his time and since the days of the Apostles, *infants were baptized*; and his opponents did not attempt to prove infant baptism a novelty, as they would have done if they had been able. On all sides it seems to have been admitted, that infant baptism was a scriptural and apostolical usage. This is no slight evidence I humbly think. Jerome reasoned on the very same premises as Augustine; and in fact, till the commencement of the sixteenth century, infant baptism was all but the universal and uninterrupted usage of the Christian Church.

7. Infant baptism has been, and is now, practised by all the branches of the Eastern or Greek Church, including Russia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Georgia, Egypt, Nubia, &c.

The Romish or Western Church, it is scarcely necessary to add, has invariably practised infant

baptism. That absurd and superstitious rites have been grafted on it is perfectly true ; but the radical characteristics remain, and some of those very rites prove the fundamental usage of infant baptism to have been the early practice.

It is also worthy of remark, that the Sabeian Churches, who profess to be the followers and strict imitators of John the Baptist, practise infant baptism.

The Jews also, prior to the advent of Jesus, baptized the infants of Gentile proselytes, according to the Talmuda, Mishna, and Gemara, as shown by Lightfoot and Maimonides.

In fact, it seems to be irresistibly established, that infant baptism is scriptural in principle and apostolic in practice ; and no opposite arguments I have yet read do more than prove that adults were baptized in the days of the Apostles, which of course we allow.

8. It may not now, perhaps, be unimportant to refer to a few of the more popular objections to infant baptism.

It has been alleged, that infants, having neither faith nor repentance, may not, therefore, receive that sacrament which is the seal of these. We are told in Scripture, we reply, that circumcision was to Abraham "a seal of the righteousness of faith;" but his children also received the seal while incapable of exercising faith. Thus a divine command expressly refutes or rather obviates this objection. It might also be consistently ar-

gued by such objectors, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" therefore, children, being incapable of faith, shall be eternally lost; or, "He that will not work neither should he eat;" and therefore children should be starved. The opponents of infant baptism have true grace but bad logic, for their reasoning would sentence their offspring to starve in time and perish in eternity. Their better feelings, however, cut short their faulty reasoning. But why is there not an express *command* to baptize infants? We reply: It is all the other way; why is there not an express *prohibition*? It was the usage of the Old Testament, to give "the seal of the righteousness of faith" to infants; why, if this principle was to be repealed, is not this repeal expressed? There is no command to admit females to the Lord's Supper; there were none present at the institution of it; and the Apostle's words are, "Let a *man* examine himself." But no party dreams of excluding females. The practice of admitting them necessarily grows out of the principles of the Christian faith. There is, however, less evidence in the New Testament for the admission of females to the Lord's table, than there is for the admission of infants to the baptismal font.

But it is said our Lord was baptized at thirty years of age, and to this precedent we ought to adhere. It must be remembered that at that time Christian baptism was not instituted, and that in the case of converts to the gospel who had received

John's baptism, baptism in the name of Jesus was subsequently administered or repeated. In the next place, the baptism of Jesus was totally different from ours. It neither signified nor sealed the same thing. It was merely "fulfilling all righteousness," by presenting himself the antitype of the priesthood, each member of which was washed or baptized on assuming the priestly functions: see Exod. xxix. 4: "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water." Exod. xl. 12: "And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water." Levit. viii. 6: "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. These ceremonies Christ exhausted and dismissed.

Infant baptism, then, I humbly submit, is alike scriptural in principle, apostolical in usage, and is fraught with many precious advantages, some of which we shall illustrate by and by.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE MODE OF ADMINISTERING BAPTISM.

THIS is really a dispute scarcely worthy of extended notice. It ranks precisely with such questions as whether we should sit or kneel at the Lord's Table — whether the bread should be leavened or unleavened — whether a spoonful or a glassful of wine should be drunk. The Christian liberality is on the side of them who contend for the use of water in the name of the Holy Trinity, and recognise the sacrament as valid, whether plunging over head or sprinkling be the mode of administration.

*Βαπτίζω* is the Greek word employed in the New Testament, and the Hebrew verb corresponding to it is *נָּסַךְ*, which last signifies to set up as a pillar. In ancient times pillars were set up or consecrated by being sprinkled or poured upon; and this idea or association would seem to have been in the mind of Ananias when he said, Acts xii. 16, — “*Arise and be baptized.*”

2. In profane writers *βαπτω* and *βαπτίζω* are unquestionably used, both in the sense of dipping and pouring or sprinkling. In heathen writers we read

of “baptizing the grass with dew,” “baptizing a garment with needlework,” “baptizing a wall with arrows,” “baptizing the head with perfume.”

In the Septuagint, which is the Greek employed in the New Testament, we read in Dan. iv. 30, or according to the authorised version, Dan. iv. 33, καὶ ἀπο τῆς ὀροσσοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ το σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐβαφη, “his body was baptized or sprinkled with the dew of heaven.” In the New Testament βαπτίζω is used in the sense of “pouring on,” or “sprinkling.” In Matt. iii. 2, John foretold that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and Peter expressly recognizes the fulfilment of the promise in Acts xi. 15, when the “Holy Ghost fell on them.” At Mark vii. 4, it is stated that the Pharisees observe βαπτισμοὺς ποτηρίων, καὶ, ξεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων, κλινῶν, “the baptisms or washings of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables.” That βαπτισμός, means sprinkling here will be apparent, if we refer to the Levitical rite to which it alludes. In Numb. xix. 18, it is thus enjoined: “And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels.”

3. As *purification* is the idea signified in the baptismal application of water, the ceremonial law almost invariably prescribes its employment in the form of sprinkling. Our blessed Lord also pronounced pouring water on the feet of his disciples, for he did not even plunge their feet into water, as symbolically and sufficiently expressive of the

cleansing of the whole person: and with these precedents we are, we think, perfectly justified in assuming pouring and sprinkling, to be not only a convenient, but a scriptural usage; and if expressiveness be appealed to as the test, pouring or sprinkling on the infant or adult is most fully emblematic and illustrative of the spiritual baptism or pouring out or descent of the Holy Spirit." But this part of the controversy is comparatively insignificant, and therefore it is preferable to let it rest.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SPONSORS.

THESE, in the judgment of the Church of Scotland, are the parents—the most natural—the most deeply interested; and their influence, too, for good or for evil, is most powerful, most present and continuously sustained.

As it is the great design of this short treatise to present the subject in a spiritual and practical view, all controversy on this part of the subject is designedly waived. Great practical duties we regard as paramount here. In order to place the responsibilities of parent-sponsors in the clearest light, they are here personally addressed.

1. By presenting your children for baptism, you profess your belief that your infant has been born in sin—has inherited the guilt of Adam, and is by nature a stranger to the covenant of grace; you profess to believe, that as the body needs to be cleansed by water, your babe's soul requires the cleansing of the blood of Jesus and the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost.

2. You thereby solemnly profess your faith in all the doctrines, and your hope in all the promises of Scripture, and that these are for you and your

children also. You declare the gospel to have been very precious to your own soul, and you now desire and pray, in this act of consecration, that the blessings signified and sealed in baptism may become the inheritance of your offspring now and for ever.

3. You hereby solemnly devote and dedicate your infant to God; professing to believe that his service is the greatest freedom; and devotedness to him the highest honour. You place your babe at the feet of Jesus to be his pupil — wishing it to be embraced in the Father's love — washed in the Saviour's blood — and renewed by the Holy Ghost. You *give* it to Christ as his *property*, and he *lends* it to you as your *trust*.

4. You desire to have your child introduced into the visible church, and made a member thereof by the sacrament of baptism. Within the visible church, mixed as it is, you believe the offers of the gospel, the means of grace, and the special presence of Christ, ordinarily are; and within this enclosure you desire your little one to be planted and to prosper as “an olive plant.”

5. You hereby solemnly and deliberately pledge yourselves as sponsors and guardians to bring up your infant in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You are trustees, and this babe is committed to you; you are tutors, and this little one you undertake to educate for eternity. You have it a consecrated thing, whom it would be sacrilege to initiate in the orgies, or to train for the drudgery

of Mammon and the world. The grandmother and mother of Timothy will be your models. Eli's conduct, in not rebuking his sons when they made themselves vile, you will alike abhor and avoid. "Take this child and nurse it for me," you hold as substantially the charge which Christ addresses to you through his minister.

6. You hereby offer up your fervent prayers to the Great Head of the Church, that He would be pleased to receive into the spiritual and true church, which is the body of Christ, this infant you now have introduced into the outward church. You have asked the minister to baptize with water, and contemporaneously with this, you implore the Lord Jesus to baptize with the Holy Ghost. You have used divine means, and you look up for a divine blessing. Your appearance with your infant at baptism proclaims that you highly value and appreciate the means of grace—that you earnestly desire and pray that the great ends to which these means point, may be realized by your offspring, and that on this solemn act of sacramental dedication of the infant given you, that Almighty blessing may descend, without which there may be heavy responsibility, but can be no saving result.

7. You also profess your belief that this solemn sacrament is more than a sign. It is a seal also. It is the authentic seal of God appended to the promises of the gospel, that to your child will be made over all the grace, and mercy, and love contained in these promises, on his or her exercising

faith in the Son of God. Baptism is God's *visible* promise. The wax on the parchment is common wax, but it is the personal adhesion of him whose name or crest it expresses, to all the stipulations of the compact, and the outward and available pledge that he is willing and ready to ratify them all. So with baptism. It is the earnest-penny—the wedding-ring—the perpetual seal—by looking on which the eye also is affected with the certainty of these truths, with which the everlasting gospel is vocal. What the rainbow was to Noah, baptism is to the church. Doubt not of the sincerity of the promises of God. Seek their fulfilment for your children, and teach your children to seek them for themselves.

#### THE FATHER'S PRAYER.

Heavenly Father, in thy strength, and in the name of thy dear Son, I take upon me these solemn and weighty responsibilities. O give me help from thy sanctuary to fulfil them. Pour down on me thy Holy Spirit. Perfect thy strength in my weakness. May I receive grace to fulfil faithfully what I have promised sincerely. May I never forget my spiritual in my natural relationship to this little one, thy gift. To thee I present this child, in the name of Jesus, a living sacrifice. At the gates of thy mercy I knock and wait. Cleanse thou the soul of this babe in that fountain opened for sin. Make good thy promise to be a God, not

only to us, but to our seed. Fulfil the pledges of thy mercy to us and our children. Pour out thy Spirit on our seed, and thy blessing on our offspring, that they may spring up as willows by the watercourses. Give me light to see clearly thy will—grace to express it in my life. Make me watchful over my temper—circumspect—righteous. Give me a double portion of that grace which teacheth to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Help me to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thee. May my example commend thy gospel to all in this house. May my walk and conversation on earth be a blessing, and may my memory be revered by them that come after me. Take away my sins by the blood of Jesus. Enlighten my ignorance by thy Holy Spirit. Purify the thoughts of my heart. Give me strength for my day—bread to eat, and raiment to put on. Thou sendest none to warfare at their own charge. I look to thy promises. I lean on thy word. Let me never be confounded. Let thy grace be sufficient for me. I ask these and all other mercies for soul and body, for myself and my household, through the intercession of my Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. Amen.

## THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

O Lord our Father, according to thy word, and in thy strength, I take upon me the solemn responsibilities of a sponsor, in addition to the weighty

cares of a parent. The babe thou hast given me "to nurse for thee," I offer to be blessed by thee. Increase my faith in thy blessed Gospel. Strengthen my confidence in thy promises. Forgive, through the atonement of Jesus, my sins and mine iniquities, and sanctify and purify my heart by thy Holy Spirit. O may a mother's ever-present example be an example powerful for good. May my words and walk be holy lessons. Give me wisdom from on high to bring up this child in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord. May I henceforth train up this little one in the right way. Do thou give the obedient heart—the willing mind. May this child be a child of God—an heir of heaven—a blessing to us—a benefit to society. May our infant's be that good part which shall never be taken away. If it be thy holy will, spare this infant; but I leave its life and death with thy fatherly wisdom. Enable me to say, "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

Thou hast helped me when brought low, and delivered my soul from death. Give me now grace to walk before thee in the land of the living. O satisfy us with thy mercy. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto our children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Hear, O Lord, the prayers of thy handmaid. Hold

thou up my goings. Prosper me with thy blessing in all my relationships, and chiefly in that of a mother in Israel. May the examples of Mary, and Elizabeth, and Eunice, be dear to me. Above all, may I look up to Him who has left us a perfect example, as well as a perfect atonement, for whose sake, and in whose name, I humbly seek these and all other mercies. Amen.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BAPTIZED.

1. You have been enrolled in the ranks of the visible Church, and associated with that holy household, of which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Prophets and Apostles were members. To the ancient Church was entrusted the honour of being the guardians of the oracles of God. To the evangelical Church is committed the same hallowed deposit. Yours is a place of heavy responsibility, of awful yet happy obligations.

2. You have been solemnly presented to God in infancy, amid the prayers of venerable saints and faithful men. You are devoted and dedicated persons. You may not get rid of all that this involves and implies, unless you get rid of Christianity wholly. You have been set apart to the office of "a holy priesthood," and it should now be your constant prayer that you may have the spirit of that divine office also. You are not common or unclean. You are federally holy, "a Jew outwardly." May you by faith in Jesus become holy in heart.

3. You are under solemn obligations to embrace the offers of the Gospel. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Spiritually, and in heart accept the Saviour as your Saviour—his righteousness as your righteousness—his atonement as your only

foundation — his holy life as your example; and openly and outwardly avow and acknowledge this by your appearance at the table of the Lord—your holy and consistent walk—your efforts to distribute what you have yourselves received and tasted, to them that are aliens and strangers.

4. To such of you as are still under the roof and subject to the authority of parents, there is reflected from your baptism, on your parents, a new and holy light; towards you they sustain a *spiritual* as well as *natural* relationship—a *priestly* as well as *parental* character. They speak to you, not only with earthly but heavenly authority. Listen to them with reverence, honour them alike in their spiritual and temporal jurisdictions, receiving their counsels and admonitions as ordinances of divine obligation.

5. Your name, according to an ancient usage, has been associated with your baptism. This should remind you when you sign it, whose you are, and for whose glory you should live. It is the memento of your responsibility — an ever-present preacher that you are not your own.

6. You are elevated to a high and honourable rank—you are numbered with the children of God—you are clothed with the holy livery, and called by the glorious name of Christian, while it may be true that you have only the form of the gospel: yet, as the ark saved from temporal judgments even the unregenerated Ham, so may the shadow of the church of God frequently screen you.

Sodom was protected by the presence of Lot. On your side do angels encamp, and while nothing short of renovation of heart and nature will qualify for heavenly happiness, yet may this outward baptism — this incorporation into outward fellowship with the saints of God, not only be to you the responsibility of a mighty privilege, but the temporal protection also of an outstretched shield, and the fiery storm that descends on the heathen may not fall on you yet, for the sake of those among whom you are placed in the providence of God.

7. In baptism you are solemnly enrolled in the ranks of those who war against sin in its root and in its branches. You may desert your colours — you may renounce your baptism — you may in maturer years declare your deliberate abjuration of every responsibility your father and mother clothed you with at the baptismal font: all this you may do, and thereby stand before God denying the gospel, and trampling under foot all its privileges; but, until you do so, the minister of Christ must impress upon your mind the sacred ties that bind you to the altar, and call upon you to follow out the obligations under which you lie. “Put off the works of darkness, put on the armour of light — put off the old man which is corrupt.” Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Seek the Holy Spirit to enable you.

8. Either, then, renounce that master to whom you were joined in baptism before you were able deliberately to exercise a choice, and whose claims

in time and excellence are far preferable to those of any other, or avow yourselves his servants, proclaim his cross your glory — his cause your cause — his word the lamp to your feet and the light to your path. Take up the heroic accents of Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Retain your allegiance to him. His service is perfect freedom. His name is a strong tower. His gift is everlasting life. His covenant, into which you have been outwardly admitted, offers to faith an everlasting righteousness, and to hope a kingdom that cannot be moved.

9. "Set your affections on things that are above, not on things that are below." The choicest earthly possessions enlarge desires they cannot gratify, and stimulate the passions they indulge. The fairest flowers of earth fade soonest when clasped most firmly. Requiems mingle with our evangels, and the plaintive minor of human sorrow runs through all our melodies. But in heaven, to which the baptized are invited to aspire, there is a surrounding zodiac of joy, from which there is no outlet — an eternity of bliss, of which there is no suspension. There the dim lights of time are absorbed into the emerald splendours of glory. "There is no night there."

## CHAPTER IX.

## PLACE OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM.

THIS Sacrament ought unquestionably to be administered in the place of *public* worship, and before the congregation. Sickness and distance alone should prevent this. All the reformed churches agree in this; and in the Church of Scotland *public* baptism is absolutely obligatory, with the exceptions we have stated.

It is the solemn introduction of the party baptized into the Christian Church; to express and embody which idea, however unnecessarily, the baptismal fonts were of old erected at the doors of the sacred edifice. It is also highly instructive, and may be the means of teaching new lessons on reviving old truths in the case of many present; and therefore no minister ought to dispense this sacrament in private, without satisfactory reasons, of which he must be the judge. We cannot see the consistency of refusing to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the sick chamber, to "two or three believers," with the practice of giving baptism in private rooms, and, as if to do away with all the solemnity of its service, finishing the day with

feasting and merriment, and occasionally with dancing.

2. The form of baptism is substantially the same in all Protestant Churches. In the Church of Scotland it is celebrated with great simplicity, and as far as possible with rigid adherence to apostolic precedent. The beauty of the rite consists in its simplicity. Gorgeous ceremony is essential to the Romish rites, in order to conceal their contrariety to the gospel; but where the truth taught is scriptural, the rite which signifies and seals it, ought to be scriptural also. Cumbersome forms burden rather than edify, and therefore the fewer rites we add to the original, the more instructive. Every thing in Christianity is simple. All the robes of Levi were cast away when the vail of the temple was rent in twain. It is emphatically a "worship in spirit and in truth."

## THE ORDER OF PUBLIC BAPTISM

IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

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THE Parents, who are the sponsors, present themselves with their child during public worship, and after the sermon, at the place appointed for baptism.

*Minister.* Is it your desire that your child should now be received into the visible church by the sacrament of baptism?

*Father.* It is.

*Minister.* Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord? — that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, descended into hell (or state of the dead) — that he arose again from the dead, on the third day ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead? Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Catholic (or universal) Church, in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

*Father.* We do.

*Minister.* Do you promise and vow before God and this people, that you will train up your child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that you will set before your child a holy and consistent example, that you will pray with and for your child; and whatever duties and responsibilities devolve on Christian parents and sponsors, these by God's grace you now promise to discharge, do you not?

*Father.* We do promise.

*The Minister prays thus:—*

O Lord Jesus, Great Head of the Church, who hath commissioned thy ministering servants to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever thou didst command, and hast promised, "Lo, I am with you always:" grant us at this time the fulfilment of thy promise, and while thy servant baptizeth with water, do thou, whose prerogative it is, baptize with the Holy Ghost; and this babe's shall be the blessing, and thine the everlasting glory.

*The Minister then pours or sprinkles water on the forehead of the infant, using these words following:—*

N. I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

*The Minister then prays.*

O Lord, be pleased to ratify in heaven what has

now been done in thy name upon earth. Regenerate and renew the heart of this little one. Seal to him all the promised blessings of the Gospel; and if spared may he grow up a blessing to his parents, an ornament to thy church, and heir of thy glory.

Give unto thy servants, the parents, grace and strength to fulfil their vows. Replenish them with thy Holy Spirit, and abundantly bless them. We thank thee for thy goodness to the mother in the time of suffering. Her soul would now magnify the Lord and rejoice in God her Saviour, for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid. May a mother's great influence be consecrated by thee to the best interest of her offspring. We would all feel that thine eyes are upon us, and would all live for thee. We ask all in the name of Jesus Christ, our only advocate and mediator.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. *Amen.*

## APPENDIX.

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### I.

THE following admirable remarks on baptism, in the shape of question and answer, are taken from a very scarce work, entitled "Truth's Victory over Error," written by the Rev. David Dickson, a celebrated Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, two centuries ago, and author of many able and useful works on theology.

#### OF BAPTISM.

"Is the sacrament of baptism with water, by Christ's appointment, to be continued in his church to the end of the world?

"Yes, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

"Well, then, do not the Quakers err, who maintain, that baptism with water is not an ordinance of divine institution, and that there is no gospel precept for it?

"Yes.

"By what reasons are they confuted?

"1st, Because Christ, taking his farewell of his disciples, gave them this commission, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' According to the original word, 'make all nations disciples,' by your doctrine, 'baptizing them in the name of,' &c. All which words are spoken by his own breath. Whence it is clear, that the same very persons that were commanded to make all nations disciples by their doctrine, were

commanded to baptize them. But it was not in their power to administer the inward baptism; that is, to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Men may well administer the water, or external sign, but it is Christ that bestows the inward grace, and thing signified; as is clear from Matt. iii. 11; where John the Baptist says, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' If any man had received this power of baptism with the Holy Ghost, then surely John would have received it, whom Jesus so highly commends, as that 'there was not a greater than he born of woman.' Matt. xi. 11. And though our Saviour subjoins, 'He that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he;' yet this will not infer that any among the teachers of the gospel, had the power of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, which he had not; but only that they did show Christ more clearly, as having most perfectly accomplished whatsoever was requisite to our salvation; and did publish this, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. And so Christ, as the master, employed only the disciples, as his servants, to dispense and act ministerially in his service, reserving the blessing of their employments to himself. Now, baptizing with the Holy Ghost is the greatest blessing of the gospel; and so cannot flow but from Christ himself. 2nd, Because the disciples of Christ acted only ministerially under him in working of miracles, therefore they could not administer baptism with the Holy Ghost, seeing this is a greater power than the other. The curing of the soul is a far greater work, than to cure miraculously the body. The work of conversion and regeneration, is a work beyond the creating of heaven and earth. There was only here the introducing of a new form, but no contrary form, or quality to be expelled. But in this, the heart of stone must not only be taken away, but a heart of flesh must be given. That they acted only ministerially under Christ, it is evident from what Peter says: 'Ye men of Israel, why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power and godliness we had made this man to walk?' Acts iii. 12. And the same Peter says, 'Eneas,

Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.” Acts ix. 34. See Mark xvi. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 10. 3rd, Because if this commission empowered the Apostles to baptize only with the Holy Ghost, and not with water, then they, in the exercise of this commission, would only have baptized men and women with the Holy Ghost, and not with water; but the contrary is manifest, Acts ii. 38, where Peter makes a distinction between being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost; namely, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which are common to all believers, and necessary to salvation. 4th, Because if baptism with the Holy Ghost be here meant, then all whom the Apostles did baptize were baptized with the Holy Ghost; which is false: for Ananias and Sapphira could not have been hypocrites if they had been baptized with the Holy Ghost. And Simon was baptized, and yet not with the Holy Ghost, as appears by Peter’s answer to him, ver. 21, 22, of the fifth chapter. 5th, Because if Christ’s commission carry not a warrant for baptizing with water, whence, then, had the Apostles a warrant for baptizing with water? Either they must produce, and let us see another commission for it, or else they must acknowledge that the Apostles did warrantably baptize with water. But another commission the Quakers cannot show us from Scripture.

“Is dipping of the person (to be baptized) into water necessary?”

“No.

“Is baptism rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person?”

“Yes. Acts ii. 41; Acts xvi. 33.

“Well, then, do not the Baptists err, who maintain dipping to be an absolute and necessary ceremony in baptism?”

“Yes.

“By what reasons are they confuted?”

“1st, Because the Greek word in the original signifies as well to pour and sprinkle water, as it signifies to dip, Mark vii. 4, where it is said, ‘And when they come from the market, unless they wash, or be baptized, they eat not.’ 2nd, Because we read of three thousand baptized in one day, in the streets

of Jerusalem, by twelve Apostles at the most, where there was no river to dip them into. Acts ii. 41. And was not Jerusalem, and all Judea, and the region round about Jordan, baptized by John the Baptist himself alone, which could not be done to all and every one by dipping? Matt. iii. 5, 6. 3rd, Were not many baptized in private houses, as we read in the history of the Acts, chap. x. 47, and xviii. 8, with ix. 17, and xvi. 33. 4th, Because dipping of infants into water in these cold countries would be hurtful and dangerous to them. But God would rather have mercy than sacrifice, Matt. ix. 13.

“Are the infants of one or both believing persons to be baptized?

“Yes. Gen. xvii. 7, 9; Gen. iii. 9, 14; Col. ii. 11, 12; Acts ii. 38, 39; Rom. iv. 11, 12.

“Well, then, do not the Baptists err, who maintain, that no infants, though born of believing parents, ought to be baptized?

“Yes.

“By what reasons are they confuted?

“1st, Because to covenanted ones, (of which number the infants of believers are, no less than their parents, Acts ii. 38, 39; Acts iii. 25; Rom. ix. 16; Gen. xvii. 7, 22,) the seal of the covenant, of which they are capable, is not to be denied. Gen. xvii. 7, 10, 11. 2nd, Because the outward sacrament of water cannot be denied to such as have received the Spirit of Christ, and to whom the promises of the New Covenant sealed up in baptism do belong. Acts x. 47; xi. 15, 16, 17. But to some infants of believers, as well as to others, come to age, the Spirit of Christ hath been given. Jer. i. 5; Luke i. 15; Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 13, 14. And to them do the promises belong. Acts ii. 39. 3rd, Because the infants of believers are members of the church, which is sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word, Eph. v. 25, 26; Joel ii. 16; Ezek. xvi. 20, 21; 1 Cor. vii. 14. Because infants, no less than others come to age, were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. 1 Cor. x. 2. 5th, Because Christ commanded that all nations should be baptized, a great part whereof were infants. Gen. xxii. 18; Matt. xxviii. 19. 6th, Because Christ commanded

baptism to be administered to disciples, (infants also are here to be taken in, Acts xv. 10,) Matt. xxviii. 19. The word in the original is *μαθητεύσατε*, teach, instruct, or make disciples among all nations, baptizing them. The signification of this Greek word may be gathered from John iv. 1, where it is said, that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made disciples. So that *μαθητεύειν* and *μαθητὰς ποιεῖν*, are both one thing. 7th, Because the children of believers were, by a divine right, circumcised under the Old Testament; therefore the children of believers, under the New Testament, ought to be baptized, because the one hath succeeded the other. That baptism succeeds to circumcision is evident, first, because they both seal up the same thing; next, as circumcision was the initiating seal under the Old Testament, so is baptism under the New; and because the Apostles did administer it so early to the disciples, at the first appearing of their new birth and interest in the covenant. Moreover, because by baptism, we are said to put on Christ. Gal. iii. 27. That they both seal up the same thing, is evident by comparing Rom. iv. 11, with Mark i. 4, Acts ii. 28, where circumcision is declared to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, and baptism is held forth to be a pledge of the remission of sins; as also may be seen Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. See Col. ii. 11, 12, where the Apostle teaches, that our being buried with Christ in baptism, is our circumcision with Christ, which shows that baptism hath succeeded to us in the room of circumcision. 8th, Because the Apostle says, that the infants but of one believing parent are holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14; that is, are comprehended in the outward covenant of God, and have access to the signs and seals of God's grace, as well as they that are born of both believing parents.

“Are grace and salvation so inseparably annexed unto baptism, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it?

“No.

“Are all that are baptized undoubtedly regenerated?

“No. Acts viii. 13, 23.

“Well, then, do not the Papists err, who maintain, that baptism is simply necessary to salvation; and that all and

those only who are baptized, are most surely regenerated in that same very moment of time wherein baptism is administered ?

“Yes.

“By what reasons are they confuted ?

“1st, Because the thief upon the cross, and others were saved, that were never baptized. Luke xxiii. 44. 2nd, Because persons unbaptized have had saving faith. Acts x, 22, 44. 3rd, Because infants that are predestinated unto life, though they may die in their mother’s womb, yet they cannot perish. Matt. xviii. 14. 4th, Because some children, before their baptism, have been beloved of God, whose love is unchangeable. Rom. ix. 11, 13. Others have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Luke i. 15 ; and some have been also comprehended within the covenant of grace. Acts ii. 39. 5th, Because, that baptism without faith, and the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, hath no efficacy to salvation. Mark xvi. 16 ; 1 Peter iii. 21. 6th, Because the baptism of the Spirit, at one time goes before, at another time follows baptism with water. Acts x. 37 ; Matt. iii. 11. 7th, Because very many that are baptized within the visible church are damned. Matt. vii. 13, 14. 8th, Because in those who are come to age, faith and repentance are pre-required to baptism ; and therefore, before they can be baptized, they have the beginning of regeneration. Acts ii. 38. 9th, Because not all that are baptized are elected. Matt. xx. 16 ; but all that are elected by God, are in time regenerated. 1 Pet. i. 2. 10th, Because the Holy Ghost is a most free agent and worker ; and therefore his operations, (whereon the efficacy of baptism depends,) whereby we are regenerated, is not tied to any one moment of time. John iii. 8. 11th, Because baptism is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance, even as the Lord’s Supper is.

“The Papists do otherwise contradict the second part, in affirming, that the virtue and efficacy of baptism (as to the abolishing and sealing up the remission of more grievous sins, and failings, which they call mortal) doth not extend itself to the time to come, but to the time past ; so that if the persons baptized fall into some deadly and dangerous sin,

which wounds the conscience, there is need of another sacrament, viz., penance, whereby the remission of that mortal sin, as they call it, is sealed up unto him.

“By what reasons are they confuted ?

1st, Because the sacrament of baptism, after the administration thereof, doth not cease to be a sacrament of the blood of Christ, which purgeth us from all our sins. Mark i. 4; 1 John i. 7. 2nd, Because justification by faith (which is sealed to us by baptism, Rom. iv. 11; Col. ii. 11, 12) is for all sins committed before and after baptism. Acts xiii. 36. 3rd, Because our Saviour says, ‘He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ Mark xvi. 16. 4th, Because not only the beginning of our salvation is referred to baptism, but also salvation itself and eternal life. 1 Pet. iii. 21. 5th, Because the Scripture bringeth arguments from the use and remembrance of baptism, by which we that have been baptized are stirred up to holiness and newness of life, and to put off the old man, and, consequently, all those sins which the adversaries call mortal. Rom. iii. 2, 3; Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 11, 12.

“Is the sacrament of baptism but once to be administered to any person ?

“Once only. Gal. iii. 27; Tit. iii. 5.

“Well, then, do not the Marcionites err, who maintain that men, after grosser failings, ought to be re-baptized ?

“Yes.

“Do not likewise the Hemerobaptists err, who maintain that men, according to their faults every day, ought every day to be baptized ?

“Yes.

“Do not, lastly, the Baptists err, who maintain that children baptized, ought to be re-baptized when they come to age ?

“Yes.

“By what reasons are they confuted ?

1st, Because baptism is a sacrament of admission into the visible church, and of regeneration (which is one only, 1 John iii. 9). 1 Cor. xii. 13; Tit. iii. 5; Eph. v. 26. 2nd, Because there is a command for repeating and frequent using the Lord’s Supper, 1 Cor. xxii. 25, 26; but no precept or command for

repeating baptism. 3rd, Because circumcision (to which succeeded baptism) was never repeated, as the passover was. 4th, Because baptism is a seal of adoption. Gal. iii. 26, 27. But whom God loveth, and hath once adopted, those he never casteth off afterwards. Rom. xi. 29. 5th, Because the apostle says, there is but one baptism, Eph. iv. 5 ; namely, not only in number, but also in the administration upon us all. Rom. vi. 3, 4."

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## II.

*The following are Extracts from the Articles and Creeds of the Reformed Churches on the nature and signification of Baptism.*

### *Thirty-nine Articles.*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth ; whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church ; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed ; faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

### *Belgic Confession.*

Christ hath instituted baptism in the place of circumcision, whereby we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other nations, and all kinds of strange religions,

being consecrated to him alone, whose badge and cognizance we wear. Therefore the Lord hath commanded all his to be baptized with pure water, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

*Augsburg Confession.*

Young infants are to be baptized.

*Confession of the Church of Scotland.*

We utterly damn the vanity of those that affirm sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs. We assuredly believe, that by baptism we are engrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of his justice, by which our sins are covered and remitted.

*Westminster Confession.*

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and a seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life. Not only those that do profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

## III.

*The following Questions are from the Larger Catechism of the Church of Scotland.*

*Q.* What is a sacrament?

*A.* A sacrament is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ in the church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace the benefits of his mediation, to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces, to oblige them to obedience, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without.

*Q.* What are the parts of a sacrament?

*A.* The parts of a sacrament are two — the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other, an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

*Q.* How many sacraments hath Christ instituted in his church under the New Testament?

*A.* Under the New Testament, Christ hath instituted in his church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

*Q.* What is baptism?

*A.* Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ had ordained the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit, of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life, and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

*Q.* Unto whom is baptism to be administered?

*A.* Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of

promise, till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him ; but infants, descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.

*Q.* How is our baptism to be improved by us ?

*A.* The needful, but much-neglected duty, of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others, by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made thereon, by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to the grace of baptism and our engagements, by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament ; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace ; and by endeavouring to live by faith, to have our conversation in righteousness and holiness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

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#### IV.

*The following judicious remarks on baptism are taken from "Garbett's Bampton Lectures," a work of great learning and value.*

"The efficacy of both sacraments is dependent on that faith which incorporates us with the Redeemer, and secures to the visible sign the accompanying energy of the promised grace.

Wherever, therefore, the holy disposition and wish to receive it exists, and the heart is prepared for its reception by the previous influences of the Spirit, should the constraint of outward circumstances prevent the application of the rite, or death intervene before its administration, the salvation of that soul is not imperilled; but by virtue of the gospel promises, to faith, and repentance, and the seal of the Holy Ghost on the heart, as surely as God is true, and Christ a sufficient Saviour, it is received as a real member of the church spiritual into the communion of the blessed. That such was the belief of the ancient church, there can be no question. We are told expressly by Augustine, that a man is not deprived of the spiritual benefits of the sacrament, though he be not baptized, so long as he finds in himself that thing which the sacrament signifies. And in mentioning the case of Cornelius, he says expressly, that there had preceded a spiritual sanctification in the gift of the Holy Spirit, 'and the sacrament of regeneration was added in the laver of baptism.' Spiritual sanctification, therefore, preceded the sign, in Augustine's opinion, and in this case existed without it, though the fulness, and outward sealing of the Christian privileges, accompanied the sacrament, which no one would deny. Finally, we know not that the first Apostles of Christ were baptized at all, and they remained in the midst of the church which they initiated with the consecrated water, examples of the mighty change figured in the outward rite, and monuments of the inward power, apart from the washing of the flesh. Jeremiah and John the Baptist were sanctified even from their mother's womb; and holy Abraham was justified and regenerated, for they are inseparable from each other, before he received the outward sacrament, which was the sign of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised. 'By these,' says Jewell, 'it may appear that the sacrament maketh not a Christian, but is a seal and assurance to all that receive it, of the grace of God, unless they make themselves unworthy receivers thereof.'"—*Garbett's Bampton Lectures*, Vol. i. p. 239-242.

## V.

*The following are extracts from eminent Divines at and since the Reformation.*

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER, in his defence of the Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments, book iv. chap. 7, thus writes: "In baptism, those that come feignedly, and those that come unfeignedly, both be washed with the sacramental water, but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost, and clothed with Christ."

BISHOP LATIMER's Sermons, (Faber).—"What is this regeneration? It is not to be christened in water, and nothing else. St. Peter said, 'We are born again.' How? Not by a mortal seed, but by an immortal. What is this immortal seed? 'By the word of the living God,' preached and opened."

BISHOP HOOPER, (Parker Society, p. 76).—"There are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost; and this baptism is in man when he believeth, and trusteth that Christ is the only author of his salvation. A traitor may receive the crown, and yet be true king nothing the rather. So a hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet no Christian nothing the rather, as Simon Magus and others."

ARCHBISHOP USHER's Body of Divinity, Robinson's Edition, 1841, p. 499.—"We do not affirm of all that are partakers of the outward washing of baptism, that they are partakers also of the inward washing of the Spirit, nor that the sacrament doth seal up their spiritual engrafting into Christ to all who may receive it. For though God hath ordained these outward means for the conveyance of the inward grace to our souls, yet there is no necessity that we should see the working of God's Spirit in the sacraments, more than in the word. The pro-

mises of salvation, Christ, and all his benefits, are preached and offered to all in the ministry of his word, yet all hearers have not conveyed to their souls by the Spirit but those whom God hath ordained in life. So in the sacraments the outward elements are dispensed to all who make an outward profession of the gospel, (for to infants, their being born in the bosom of the church, is instead of an outward profession,) because man is not able to distinguish corn from chaff; but the inward grace of the sacrament is not communicated to all, but to those only who are heirs of those promises whereof the sacraments are seals. 1. Often baptism is deferred, and that upon every trifling occasion, as if it were a business of no great weight and moment, but might attend every one's leisure; and many times, through delay, the child dieth without it, which though it doth nothing prejudice the child's salvation, yet it will lie heavy upon the parent's conscience for neglecting God's ordinance, when he afforded opportunity. 2. Often the minister is sent from home to perform that service with few in a private chamber, when no imminent necessity urgeth to the dishonour of so sacred a business, which ought to be a most solemn and public action of the whole congregation. 3. Though the child be brought to church, yet often some by-day is chosen, and not the Lord's Sabbath. 4. If it be on the Sabbath-day, then the main care and preparation is about matters of outward pomp and state; everything is fitted and prepared for the purpose, but only that which should chiefly be, viz., the hearts and minds of those that go about a business of that nature. 5. While the sacrament is in performing, the demeanour of many sheweth that they have a slight opinion of that service. 6. Lastly, infants are brought to the sacrament of baptism in infancy, but are never by their parents taught the doctrine of baptism when they come to years of understanding: baptism is not made use of as it ought in the whole course of men's lives.

"1. Every one should consider that it is no customary formality, but an honourable ordinance instituted by the lawful authority of God himself. 2. Every one should consider that there are infinite mercies sealed up by it to the faithful and to their seed. Every one that is present at baptism, should con-

sider, that it being a public action of the congregation, every particular person ought reverently to join in it. Shall the whole Trinity be present at baptism, and we be gone?"

RICHARD HOOKER's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. sect. 57 :—  
 "The sacraments are not physical, but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship; for all receive not the grace of God who receive the sacraments of his grace."

WITSIUS writes :—"If no other benefit accrued from infant baptism, every prudent person will own it to be very great, that it lays the most inviolable necessity on parents carefully to train up their children, which they have so early devoted to God in the mysteries of the Christian religion, and in the practice of true piety.

BEZA writes :—"We baptize the young children of the faithful, as they have used and done from the Apostles' days in the church of God; and we doubt not, but God by this mark, joined with the prayers of the church, doth seal the adoption and election of those whom he hath predestinated eternally, whether they die before they come to age of discretion, or live to bring forth fruits of their faith in due time, and according to the the means which God hath ordained."

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON writes :—"You think the renouncing of baptism a horrible word, and that we should speak so only of witches; yet it is a common guiltiness, that cleaves to all who renounce not the filthy lusts and the self-will of our own hearts. For baptism carries in it a renouncing of these, and so the cleaving to these is a renouncing of it. Oh! we are all sealed for God in baptism, but who lives as if it were so! How few have the impression of it on the conscience, and the expression of it in the walk and fruit of their life! We have been a long time hearers of the gospel, whereof baptism is the seal, and most of us often at the Lord's table. What hath all this done upon us? Ask within: Are your hearts changed? Is there a new creation there? Where is that spiritual-mindedness? Are your hearts dead to the world and sin, and alive to God, your conscience purged from dead works?"

THE END.



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The Communion Table.

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## PREFACE.

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IN this little work, the writer desires to present in the most intelligible terms, right Scriptural views on an ordinance very much and very generally misinterpreted and misunderstood. Nothing can be plainer than the Scriptural account of it. Nothing can be more perplexing than the descriptions and definitions often given of it.

There is nothing in this treatise, either new, or eloquent, or grand. Its plainness is the chief recommendation of its style, and its truthfulness the only excellency in its matter.

The author earnestly prays that it may please the Holy Spirit to bless this work to the edification and comfort of his people.



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# THE COMMUNION TABLE.

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## I.

### THE LAW AND LIMIT OF ORDINANCES.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—JOHN iv. 16.

According to thy gracious word,  
In meek humility,  
Thy will I do, my dying Lord,  
I will remember thee.

AFTER the remarkable conversation held between our Lord and the woman of Samaria,—the one the preacher, the other the arrested but solitary audience,—our Lord said to her, in order to bring her sin clearly into the light of her own eyes, and thereby conviction to her conscience, “Bring thy husband;” and then the great fact came out, that, living in the violation of the law of God, she was destitute alike of that character which could appreciate the living water, and of that peace which is the fruit of its possession. She perceived from our Lord’s remark that he knew her heart, and justly inferred that “the Seacher of hearts” is God’s

great and exclusive attribute. The woman felt his hand amid her tangled affections, and his eye upon the secret recesses of her inmost soul; and the consciousness of this instantly brought forth the expression alike of her fears and faith: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She knew not that he was *the* Prophet, but she concluded that he must be at least a prophet. But here do we discover the features of human nature. Instead of bringing her sins more fully before him, in order to be expiated and extirpated, she introduced a mere speculative question about ceremonials. When a person feels God's truth touching the conscience, his first effort is to cast it off and get rid of it, to put something between it and the heart; because the last thing that the sinner likes to come close to him is that truth which is not merely intellectual truth but holy truth. The woman felt it, and therefore raised the question about places of worship, and forms of worship; she started the old controversy which had long been agitated and was not then settled, and in fact, if we may judge from many of the most popular discussions of the day, is changed in name, but unsettled still. Jesus solved it by announcing one of those sublime and noble aphorisms which at once proved, when contrasted with all that was said by the mightiest before him, and all that was uttered by the wisest round him, that "never man spake like this man." He announced one of those great truths which lie at the root of all true worship, without which the

grandest worship is but mummary, and the most harmonious praise is but the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass. On this grand requirement I desire to speak plainly, introductory to my explanation of the Lord's Supper.

"The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." These last words lie at the root of every right apprehension of the ordinances, ceremonies, and usages of the Gospel. By this criterion we must examine every form, and ceremony, and usage. In as far as it contradicts this, or runs away from this, in so far it ceases to be scriptural and useful. There are in these words two great facts, God and worship. God is said to be "a Spirit;" the worship is required to be "in spirit and in truth." All worship, therefore, must be suited to the nature of God. He is a Spirit, and yet it must not be opposed to the nature of man, who is flesh and blood as well as spirit. There are two great misconceptions of all worship, which more or less prevail, the one the extreme of the other, in every age and phasis of the Christian Church. One party, or one side, repudiate all outward forms, all ceremony, rite, ordinance, sacrament, on the ground that God is a Spirit; and therefore they are inapplicable. Another party takes rites, ceremonies, sacraments, usages, and materializes them, sensualizes them, or rather, I should add, idolizes

them, and makes them idols or substitutes for God, until the worship is continued for the worship's sake, and God, the object of worship, is lost in the foliage, or buried amid the pomp and grandeur of the ceremony in which he is approached. These are the two extremes. The first, or the abstraction of all rite, sacrament, ceremony, and means of grace, tends to mysticism, or quietism, having no outward exponent or worship whatever; and when the fervour of the first feeling dies away, it ends generally in absolute scepticism; because man must have an outward form in which to worship; without this, the worship is unsuitable to his nature, and will cease to be exercised at all. We cannot breathe in an exhausted receiver, we cannot live without air; if we were pure spirit, we might live thus; but as we are not pure spirit, but compound creatures, our worship must be like our condition, partly palpable, partly spiritual, but yet its predominating and controlling element must be, to be right and acceptable, in spirit and in truth. Another party rushes to the very opposite extreme, and plunges into Popery; the sign takes the place of the thing signified, the worship of Him who is worshipped. The worshipper rests on his worship, and does not stretch his wing and soar beyond it; and the worship, instead of conducting to Him who ought to be its object and end, takes all the adoration to itself, and becomes a god to him that exhibits it. Hence, in the Church of Rome, every rite is there for itself: the worshipper rarely looks

beyond it, and the tendency of the whole system, instead of lifting man nearer to God, is to lower God till the idea of Deity is buried in the sensualism of man. Our Lord's prescription is the corrector of both. There must be worship—worship suited to the nature of Him who is a Spirit, and therefore spiritual, and yet fitted to the nature of man, who is animal and spiritual too. There must be worship, but the object of it God alone—nothing short of him—nothing beyond him—nothing on either side of him. There must be place, but it may be anywhere, neither “this mountain nor that.” There must be time and tongue, but all times are canonical, all tongues are hallowed, if there be a holy heart and spiritual worship. The noblest music has no melody unless it be in spirit and in truth. The grandest architecture has no beauty unless a spiritual worship be presented in it. The great requirement is “in spirit and in truth;” the circumstantials must be, but they may be adjusted, arranged, and shaped to the convenience of man, but never man shaped to them. The Jew could carry on his worship in Palestine only, it was out of place when out of Palestine: the Mahometan can carry on his worship in warm climates only; take it from beneath the sun, and it freezes. The Hindoo worship must be in India; remove it from the Ganges, and it dies. But the Christian's worship may be on “Greenland's icy mountains,” or on “India's coral strand;” it may be in the Torrid Zone, or under

the Equator, or at the Pole; it may be in all lands, in all latitudes, in all places, under any circumstances, at midnight or at mid-day; this only is essential, that it be "in spirit and in truth." God is where this is, to accept the worship, to hear the worshipper, and to answer his petition. The great essential in the worshipper is that the heart shall be there, that it shall be "in spirit and in truth," *i. e.* really *bonâ fide*. God, when he listens to worship, does not look at the eloquence of the words, but at the feeling of the worshipper. God does not mind that the prayer is in a rugged form, or that the language is not beautiful, but he does mind whether the heart be there or not. And hence, whenever you approach God, be it in prayer, in praise, or in the Lord's supper, be it at baptism, at reading his word, or sitting in the pews, — pray that within you may hear him saying, "My son, give me" — beautiful words, if you like — a quiet Sabbath aspect, if you like — but give me this, without which the worship is in vain — "thy heart."

Scepticism, or Socinianism, which is the lowest form of Christianity, if Christianity at all, would do without rites and ceremonies; and Popery again, which is the opposite extreme, would make them all and in all. Hence the Socinian volatilizes the Lord's supper, if I may use the word, into a metaphor, and the Romanist condenses it into a god.

The Lord has instituted, it is plain, in the ancient dispensation many, and in the Christian, or the

spiritual dispensation, still several outward ordinances, in which, and in the legitimate and Scriptural use of which, he is by his own people legitimately worshipped. Do you ask, why God has instituted these ordinances? Not for himself but for us. He needs them not: man cannot well, in this imperfect dispensation, do without them. Were we all flesh and blood, we could do nothing without them; because we are spirit, and flesh and blood, there is the material and there is the spiritual part, and in their proper places, and in their right view, and by a true heart, we use them as becomes us, and worship God "in spirit and in truth." To give some instances of this. In Deut. xi. 29: God said to the Israelites, "And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land, whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal." Why this now? why not say that the blessing shall be on those that fear me, and the curse on those that hate me? I answer, God saw that without some visible memorial of the great truth, they would very soon forget it. So in the book of Numbers, in chap. xv. 38, 39, we find another direction, which seems very unnecessary at first sight: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may

look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes." They might say, why appoint this visible memorial? have we not thy word? must we not recollect thy precepts? God knew best, and had not the visible memento been necessary, God had never instituted it, for there is nothing supererogatory in the appointments of God. When the Lord instituted bread and wine to be the expressive memorials of incarnation, his death and sacrifice, and commanded, "Do this in remembrance of me," what would be more natural than for the Apostles to have said, "Lord, do this in remembrance of me? Can we, Lord, ever forget thee — thee, who hast loved us as a mother loveth her own children — thee, who hast fed us all our life long — thee, who hast calmed the sea, and hushed the winds, and multiplied the loaves, and opened the springs, and poured peace into our hearts, and redeemed us and sanctified us, and made us like thee and thine own? we never can forget thee. If we forget thee, let our right hand forget its cunning, and our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth." Christ knew best; he knows what is in man, and he who demands the worship in spirit and in truth knew that men would be prone to forget him, and that they would need that memento to remind them of him, and therefore he said, "This do in remembrance of me," and "shew forth my death until I come again." It is thus, then, we see, how Christ

sympathises with us, and ministers not to the pride that despises ordinances, nor to the carnality that idolizes them, but to our necessities.

We must take care never to add, if possible, to the ordinances and appointments of Christ. He has appointed only two great sacraments, expressive, beautiful, and eloquent of him in the right light and in their proper use; we must add no more. He saw that fewer would not do, and he, no doubt, saw as clearly that more were not required. The imminent error—the error of the day—is, less contempt of ordinances than idolatry of ordinances. There can be scarcely a greater unfaithfulness than to take the ordinance which Christ has appointed to lead us to him, and to make it a substitute for him. He has instituted the Lord's supper as a memento of him, not as a substitute for him, and whenever one is so taken up with the outward ceremony, so charmed with the splendour of the rite, so fascinated with the form, or the accompaniments of it, that it comes to occupy the main place, then are we on wrong ground, we are upon the verge of danger, it is time to retrace our steps, and seek to make the ordinance not a substitute for the Lord of the ordinance, but only a help to reach him—a telescope through which to see him more distinctly, and so behold “the King in his beauty, and the land also which is very far off.” Where the ordinance is abused, and made a substitute for him, instead of being done in remembrance of Christ;

it that ordinance could become animate and vocal, and speak forth its sense of desecration, it would say, as one said of old; "Am I a god, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send to me?" Thus the system of putting baptism in the place of the Holy Spirit, and saying every baptized person is regenerate; and the Lord's supper in the room of Christ, and saying the bread becomes his very flesh, and the wine his very blood, is not only the essence, but the very form of Romanism itself; it is making the sacrament "sit in the temple of God, and say that it is God." God, then, has given us the ordinances, not to be substitutes for him, but to be means that enable us the better to remember him, the more clearly and distinctly to know him, the more gloriously and spiritually to come into communion with him. One class comes like Aaron of old, taking the gold, beautiful in its place in the sanctuary, and melting it into an idol; another party, shocked at the terrible idolatry, comes to avenge the wrong that has been done, and grinds it to powder, and scatters the dust upon the face of the waters of the earth. These are the two poles, as it were, of the ecclesiastical system, the one party making gods of the ordinances, the other party grinding them to dust and trampling them under foot. But there is the true party, consisting of true worshippers; they that give the ordinance the ordinance's place, and to the Lord of the ordinance the exclusive supremacy that belongs only to him.

Let me now mention some of those ordinances to which we are to apply this test of using them in spirit and in truth. The Bible, and the reading of the Bible, is a great ordinance of God. It is a great fact, that there is nothing upon earth so like God, nothing near us that so embodies and develops the mind of God, as the Bible. And hence the only pictures of God that should be in churches are texts: the only pictures that were in the ancient churches, were fragments of the word of God. When I see a picture of Jesus, drawn even by the master painters of the world, I see a man crucified; so were martyrs; but I do not see the inner and real agony of him that bore the sins of the world. I see there one bearing a cross, but I do not see him bearing on that cross the sins of mankind. But when I read that text, "God is love," I there read God himself, I there hear God; the Bible is the portrait of Deity; its promises, its precepts, its revelations, are all rays from his countenance, sentiments from his heart; and hence our blessed Lord breathed out his inmost soul upon the cross, not in words coined for the occasion, but in the language of those Psalms which he had inspired by his Holy Spirit. Thus, we cannot value the Bible too highly, but we must not place it in the room of God. We cannot look at its instrumentality in enlightening our hearts, too strongly; but the instant that we think that the Bible can sanctify us, or the reading of the Bible regenerate us without God's Holy Spirit, we put the ordinance in the room of the

Lord of the ordinance, and cease to use it “in spirit and in truth.” The preaching of the Word is truly important; all of you have felt that the sermon read, however excellent or useful, is not equal in freshness and force to the sermon preached: there is a power in the latter which has evaporated from the former: and yet if you come to listen to a minister, and think that his preaching, or his talent, or his powers, are alone adequate to convert you, you put the man in the room of his Master, and you endanger your own soul.

The Sabbath is another ordinance of God: we are to look upon it, and use it, and deal with it, also “in spirit and in truth.” The Sabbath is not a new institution: it was not appointed at the giving of the law; most persons think it is no older than the days of Moses; but the very first word of the fourth commandment tells you it is much older; it does not say thou shalt take the seventh day out of the rest, and hallow it, but it says, “*Remember* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.” It is an old institution, a thing of the past to be recollected, not an institution of the present that was then for the first time made; and what makes the Sabbath in my mind so singularly obligatory and important is, that it is not like other things placed in the ceremonial law, but in the very heart and front of the moral law. It ceases, so placed, to be a mere ceremony, and it becomes a great moral duty or ordinance: and it is to the Christian still more holy than to the Jew, for it has superadded to the recol-

lection of God ceasing from his creating work, the hallowed recollection that God rose triumphant from redemption work, having made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting life; and yet the Sabbath is not to be regarded as some regard it, as a fasting day,—it is rather a feasting day; it is a high and holy festival, and in ancient times—I do not say that there is anything to warrant it, it merely shows the sense then entertained of it—on week days, the early Christians knelt at prayer, but on Sabbath-day they always stood at prayer, the meaning of which they said was, that the Sabbath was always to be held a joyful day, and the recollection of the resurrection of the Lord, to be therefore a kind of Easter Sabbath recurring every week, on which they were to be called to “go into God’s courts with thanksgiving, and into his gates with praise;” and therefore, while a Sabbath heart and a Sabbath countenance ought to be solemn, they ought not to be sad: for this day is a joyful day—it is the gem—“the pearl of days,” the brightest, the most beautiful, the most happy of the seven. For a person therefore to say, I have kept the Sabbath because I have been to church in the morning, not only indicates a misconception of the requirements of the Sabbath, but of its very nature; he looks upon it as a penance; he has gone to church to do the penance that he thinks God exacts, and having done so much, however painful, he now thinks he may enjoy the remainder of the day as his own. We are not to regard the Sabbath

as a pain, but as a pleasure, as honourable, holy, beautiful; and if there be one day in the week on which we should be happy, it is the Sabbath. "The Lord is risen," is the joyful sound—the sound that is in the chimes of all its bells, that ought to be in all its music, that ought to be in all the hearts of its worshippers; and hence I believe that wherever there are right and true conceptions of evangelical religion, the Sabbath ceases to be a funeral day, as it is sometimes made, and comes to be a holy festival day, as the first Christians made it.

Another ordinance is prayer, which also is to be "in spirit and in truth." How many misconceptions are there on the subject of prayer! Many pray because their consciences drive them to it, and they would feel uncomfortable if they did not. Others pray as a sort of expiation, which God will receive on account of their sins. But this is not the nature of prayer. Others, again, have the idea that they are drawing near to an angry and avenging Being, and that they must hold up their hands, and deprecate, as it were, the shooting forth of the bolts of his vengeance. They go to God with a constant feeling that he is ready to crush them, and that they must do all they can to keep off the outpouring of his vengeance, which is ever ready and ever accumulating, as they think, to fall upon them, and hence they crouch in prayer, and tremble like criminals in the dock before a judge. This is not prayer. God hath "sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying Abba Father:" we draw

near to God in true prayer, when we say, "Our Father." How does your child come to you? with an elastic footstep and a bounding heart, welcoming the father's voice as the sweetest music in the hall, and loving the father's knee as a better seat than a monarch's throne. And so should we draw near to God: HE is in Christ our Father. "Our Father"—all the affection that the best of children feels to the best of fathers, magnified and multiplied a thousand-fold, is the feeling with which we ought to draw near to God; and yet most men, when they think of God, are not merely solemnized, as they ought to be, but they are sad, they are terrified. Their impression is that religion is a good thing when we come to die, just as a very nauseous dose of medicine may be when we are ill; that it is an excellent thing at funerals, and they may tolerate it even at bridals; but as to having religion to make us happy, they think it is like bringing the picture of disease, or death, or the grave, to a wedding. What grievous misconception is this! The Gospel is the good news, it is the Gospel: Christianity is good news. And what are the news? That God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, no more wishing to treat you as criminals, but to receive you as children, and to forget your sins, and welcome you to his bosom cordially: and as such you are to draw near to him, and seek blessings from him. The blessings we obtain not in answer to prayer are too generally wasted, but the blessings we receive in

answer to prayer are generally rendered back to God in adoration, thanksgiving, and praise. Hannah prayed for a son; she obtained Samuel, and she lent him to the Lord; what prayer receives, praise offers. I believe that none of us have a high enough idea of prayer; it is nor words, nor length, nor liturgy, nor form, nor rubric, but the cry of a broken heart,—the sigh of an humble spirit,—the “God be merciful to me a sinner,” when no ear hears but God, and no eye can see the throbbing of the heart but the Searcher of all hearts—this is prayer. Many say prayers who never pray; many pray who do not often say prayers. It is the heart that prays: all else is subsidiary, circumstantial, non-essential.

So again, Baptism is an ordinance of God, and a very precious one: it is to be administered, it is to be regarded, it is to be used also “in spirit and in truth.” But it is not a mere sign; it is more, it is admission into God’s visible church, a great and important institution. It is planting in the field that contains both tares and wheat; it is bringing the individual within the reach of means the most mighty, of opportunities the most precious; of responsibilities the most solemn; but it is not more: it is not regeneration; it is a deadly error to say so; it is a miserable fallacy in any one to conclude that it is so, because the moment we get a right idea of the depth of man’s fall, that moment we see that all ordinances are too short to reach down to him, and too weak to bring him up again

to the light of day ; we see at once that in order to retrieve man from the depth of his ruin, there must be put forth an omnipotent arm, that arm the exponent of omnipotent love. And thus baptism, whatever it may signify, whatever it may seal, is not the Holy Spirit ; it cannot do the Holy Spirit's work, it never did do it, it never will do it, and the moment it is made to shine with one ray taken from the glory of God, it becomes a curse to him that administers it, and no blessing to him that receives it.

## THE INSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNION.

Thy body broken for my sake,  
My bread from heaven shall be ;  
Thy testamental cup I take,  
And thus remember thee.

At every stage of the dispensation of the Gospel, from the fall to the close of the sacred canon, there have been some outward signs or symbols expressive of great evangelical truths. These are needful, not for God, but for us. Were we all intellect, we could do without them. Were we all sense, we could not rise above them. As we are, we use the symbol as a stepping-stone to a higher platform and a wider horizon, from which we may see truth more clearly and fully. The Socinian or Sceptic would renounce them. The Romanist would worship them. The former would evaporate the Lord's supper into a metaphor, the latter would condense it into an idol; the Christian observes it as the institution of God, and through it apprehends Him more closely. He neither neglects it as a supererogation, nor trusts in it as an exorcism. He will not turn its gold into an idol, nor will he grind it to powder, and scatter it to the four ends of the earth.

The simple record of the Lord's supper is contained in Matt. xxvi. 26—30. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

Here we have a holy and beautiful scene. The last moments of the Saviour's life upon earth were spent like his precious blood, in sacrifice. Like all he did and endured, his last evening, like his last moment, was vicarious. His last thoughts, like his thoughts in eternity, were consecrated to us.

He had just finished the Passover supper, of the significancy of which we will afterwards write. He desired to make the departure of one ancient rite the occasion of the institution of one simpler, sublimer, and more enduring. Accordingly, he took a portion of the bread of which they had just been partaking. He implored a blessing, and gave thanks over the bread, thus separated to a sacred and evangelical use, and thereby instituted this a perpetual commemorative feast. He brake it—the symbol of his bruised and broken body. He gave it to his disciples, as he gave his life for them all,

and reminded them that this bread, thus blessed and broken, should be received by them, and all that should believe on him through their word, as a silent yet vivid and eloquent memorial of his incarnation, and sacrifice, and death.

Next he took the cup of wine, used at the Paschal supper, and desired them all to drink of it as the memorial of that precious blood which alone cleanseth from all sin; that blood which was shed for its remission, that life which was sacrificed that we might live. In that blood or sacrifice, an eternal yet new covenant was sealed, as all ancient covenants among men were ratified over slain and sacrificed animals.

He did not join such a communion again on earth; but he drinks the fruits, and joys, and felicity it secured and sealed and signified, with his saved and glorified ones now in heaven, within the precincts of his Father's kingdom.

The Lord and his little company of communicants then "hymned"—that is, praised and sang together. No doubt they *chanted*, for that was the Jewish practice, a portion of the 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, and 118th Psalms, all of which were the hymns employed at the celebration of the Passover.

Such is the inspired history of the circumstances, ceremony, and celebration of this holy ordinance. How unlike the rubrics of the Roman Missal, are these the rites of the Last Supper! Leonardo da Vinci, and the painters of the Church of Rome, give far more scriptural representations of it than

her Pontiffs, Bishops, and Priests. In the words of the Evangelists, however, we have a standard which tradition has superseded, and superstition overlaid, but which none have dared to deny or dispute.

We turn to the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, for a fuller exposition of its meaning. Truths briefly enunciated in the Gospels, are often developed more fully in the Epistles. In these last, the Spirit takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them unto us. The historical is embosomed more fully in the doctrinal. The facts recorded by the Evangelist are set forth by the Apostle, as the luminous *nuclei* of precious truths. What is set forth in the Gospels directly, is in the Epistles treated controversially, from its being in reply to some question, or for the correction of some abuse, or for the settlement of some dispute.

In 1 Cor. xi. 23, Paul thus writes: "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night that he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This is the new testament in my blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore,

whosoever shall eat this blood, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh (κρίμα, judgment) damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

The special sin of the Corinthians, was their using the bread and wine at the table of the Lord, as if it were a common meal, or rather a heathen festival. They satisfied their hunger with the one, and drank to excess of the other, μὴ διακρίνων, not discerning, not discriminating the Lord's body, not making the distinction that ought to be between a common meal, and this holy communion feast. It is true now that irreverent and thoughtless participation of the Lord's supper, without knowledge, love, faith, repentance, is sinful in the sight of God. But it is not likely that this specific Corinthian sin will be practised now. At all events, it is scarcely just to threaten the earnest, enlightened, believing, but timid Christian, with the chastisements and judgments inflicted on the Corinthians. Almost every expression used by the Apostle is emphatic, suggestive of tender and profitable reflections.

"On the same night on which Jesus was betrayed"

one would think his spirit must have been so heavy with the foreseen sufferings of the next day, that he could have thought of nothing else—but this very night—this deepening twilight of so dark a morrow—he consecrates to the instruction and comfort, not of his Apostles only, but of us. Self was sacrificed for us. Time, thought, sorrow, joy, all the blessed Saviour was, enjoyed and experienced, were laid upon the altar for us.

“He took bread.” Simplicity is eminently characteristic of the Gospel. For the celebration of so expressive a solemnity, he did not bid them bring up from the caves of the sea their buried gems—nor from the mines of the earth its hidden and precious ores—nor did he command the use of aught that was costly and uncommon, lest it should be supposed that outward splendour was needed, and adequate or adapted to express spiritual beauty, or that this feast was the exclusive privilege of the rich. He selected “our daily bread” to be the sign of “the living bread;” and wine, in some shape all but indigenous to all lands, to be the sign of his most precious blood.

These symbols are perhaps appropriate in themselves, but it is his institution that makes them specially so.

Had he enjoined any other rite, or form, or service—the scattering of flowers once a year on the floor of his sanctuary, or a visit to some spot designated in his word, the obligation would have been the same, and the rite would have been no less

significant. It is the institution and blessing of Christ, that gives to this ordinance its excellence and preciousness.

At a very early period, after the days of the Apostles, the simplicity of the Lord's supper began to disappear. Superstition — sensuous worship — semi-Jewish and semi-heathen prejudices began to cloud its beauty, and alter its apparent significance. While no such dogma as transubstantiation was known or believed during the first eight centuries, yet exaggerated statements, both on baptism and the Lord's supper, became very common. Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and Irenæus, from their anxiety to give it grandeur in the sight of the heathen, endeavoured to show that it was not κοινὸς ἄρτος οὐδὲ κοινὸν πῶμα, common bread, but the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, the medicine of immortality, in which were virtues for soul and body. The Fathers also began to apply to it the expressions θυσία and προσφορά — sacrifices, analogous to those of Levi; and Cyprian went so far as to claim for it the character of a sacrifice, not repetitionary, as the Romanists claim, but imitative of that of Christ.

In the ninth century, those highly figurative expressions in which the Fathers had indulged, began to receive a literal interpretation. Paschasius Rhadbertus, abbot of Corbey, compressed the floating metaphors into the dogma of transubstantiation; and though faithful protests were lifted up against this monstrous error by Rabanus Maurus, and others, yet it grew amid surrounding

darkness as in a congenial climate, till transubstantiation received by name the sanction of the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and thenceforth became the distinctive doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

This dogma wars against the testimony of four of the five senses; contradicts and undermines the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus; destroys the nature of a sacrament; leads to the most revolting results; lays the foundation of the so-called propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass, the adoration of the host, and other doctrines foreign to the nature, truths, and express declarations of the word of God. Such is the corrupting energy of fallen man, that no truth has been proclaimed by the oracles of creation, or revealed in the page of Scripture, which he has not perverted.

The fairest flowers have withered in his hand, or faded by his touch. He has turned the truth of God into falsehood, and the mystery of godliness into the mystery of iniquity, and the sublime but simple truths of Scriptural Christianity into the absurd and revolting dogmas of a deadly superstition.

## THE FIRST COMMUNION.

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve."—MATT. xxvi. 20.

Gethsemane can I forget,  
Or there thy conflict see,  
Thine agony and bloody sweat,  
And not remember thee!

THE passage at the head of this chapter is the earliest account of the celebration of the Lord's supper. The language is extremely simple, and yet fully descriptive of its origin, its nature, and its end. We naturally desire to know what were the last words of one we love; we long to know what his last thoughts were, what his parting accents were, what subject, in short, occupied the largest share and the latest interest in his affections. We have all this told us of one who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. We have here the last words that he uttered previous to His crucifixion; and the last and not the least important institution which He appointed and designed to commemorate his dying love. Here too we read the account of the treachery of one whose name is the synonyme for all that is hateful in human speech, and about whose doom we can have no doubt, for the Spirit of God has declared it.

Our Lord evidently introduces an important statement, in the words recorded by Matthew, because he employs the prefatory words, "Verily, I say unto you." The word "verily" is the translation throughout the Gospel of St. John of the word *ἀμην*, or as we call it, Amen. Literally translated the verse runs, "I, the Amen, say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," and it is by this translation that we connect it with the frequent description of himself in the Apocalypse, where he calls himself "The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness." Whenever Jesus prefaces a statement with "Verily, verily," we may always be sure that the statement introduces sentiments of the greatest importance, or announces a statement accompanied by circumstances of peculiar pain, or at least emphasis. It is so here. He makes a painful announcement, as painful as it was unexpected, to the eleven who heard it, "Verily, I say unto you, that *one of you* shall betray me." This statement also involved the fact that Jesus contemplated his death as certain. His betrayal he intimates would be but the preface to his crucifixion. His disciples had scarcely become accustomed to this. They did not believe he was to die; the last article they received into their creed was the prediction that Jesus was to die in the room and in the stead of sinners. We do not read, however, that upon this occasion they made the slightest objection to this intimation; perhaps they had been taught this truth more fully, and their minds were made willing

to receive whatever Jesus stated. There seems to be peculiar grief implied in these words, "Verily, I say unto you, that *one of you* shall betray me." As if he had said, I could bear to have been betrayed by them that have ever been my foes; I could bear to have been betrayed by those that have denounced and derided me as a malefactor and pretender; I could bear to have been betrayed by those who are the confessed and professed enemies of all that is good and holy, beneficent and divine; but to be betrayed by the recipient of my bounty, by one of those whom I have fostered as a mother her own; by one whom I have commissioned to exercise great functions, and clothed with great authority, and inspired with pure and heavenly sentiments — this I feel to be not the least painful element in that bitter cup which I have to drink for a world's transgression. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that *one of you* shall betray me." And yet when one looks at it, it was not so much the pain of betrayal that he so much deprecated as the guilt of the person who should inflict it. "One of you shall betray me." It was not the ingratitude it displayed that he so much deplored, as that one of his own should be so far left to himself as to be guilty of so terrible a crime. There was nothing selfish in the Redeemer's grief. It was not the wound that he grieved at, but the hand that should inflict it; it was not what he should endure, but from whom he should endure it; it was not his chief grief that

Pilate should crucify him, but that a disciple should betray him. "One of you shall betray me." We cannot fail to see in this passage how great is the forbearance of our blessed Lord. He needed that Judas should develop his character; he knew what it was; nor that any should tell him, for he knew what was in man: and yet how wonderful is the quiet, the forbearance, the silence, with which Jesus witnessed the going out and coming in for three years of this man who was ever meditating and arranging to betray him. Surely there is here a striking precedent for us to imitate; and yet one that it is most difficult to imitate. When we see one whom we know to be an hypocrite, our impatience is so great that we can scarcely restrain ourselves from instantly expressing our convictions; and yet there may be the highest purity exhibited, and not the least deficiency in faithfulness in bearing, and patiently forbearing, until the time matures the character, and shows to the outward eye what the higher wisdom has made known to the inner man. Our Lord has set us the example of judging men, not by our suspicions or our construction, but by their deeds; "by their fruits ye shall know them;" and by the fruit that the tree produces you are to pronounce your verdict on the excellence or the badness of the tree. As far as we can see from this passage, Judas was admitted to the Lord's table, and partook of the sacred festival. Some have come to a different conclusion; they have supposed

that he retired at the close of the passover, and just before the elements were distributed. I doubt if this conclusion can be sustained by comparing the parallel passages of all the Gospels. I do not see that we gain anything by proving the contrary; but if it be of course the fact, we are to state it, whether we gain or lose by it; but I do not see that we can gain anything, either for Christianity or for the Bible, if we needed it, or for the Church at large, by doubting or denying what seems indisputable. Those at a communion table are just like those who stand at the baptismal font, or who make profession of the truths of the everlasting Gospel—a mixed body. The visible Church is not to be in this dispensation co-extensive with the spiritual and the true Church. The tares and the wheat are so mingled together, that if men attempted to separate they are sure to do mischief; our Lord did not weed the first communion. At the judgment-day the tares shall be collected and cast into the fire, and the wheat shall be gathered into the garners of heaven. Let us not confound the present with the age to come. The visible Church is not a perfect Church. There was a Judas at the first communion table, there was one tare among the eleven wheat, and it will be so still. There is no Church so pure that it has no alloy, there is no communion table spread, from the east to the west, that is surrounded wholly and exclusively by regenerated men. Judas was among

the twelve; the tares are among the wheat; all are not Israelites that are of Israel.

The word "supper," which is used by the Evangelist to denote the communion, was among the ancients the principal meal. It held the place of the modern dinner; it was taken late in the day, about eight in the evening. It was understood to be what is called the most confidential meal, when friends were admitted to share the hospitalities of the house, and all were treated as on a footing of equality, and one unbosomed his sentiments to another, and all felt that they were friends or brethren. Our Lord appointed his communion at this time, that the idea of confidence, of mutual love and reciprocal attachment, might predominate in the minds of his followers, and that this act might vividly teach them that they are brethren who meet there; that they approach their Elder Brother at their heavenly Father's board; that they are common heirs of a coming glory, the near and dear inmates of a common home, and the followers of their common Lord, "who loved them, and gave himself for them." I cannot but notice that when our Lord revealed the fact at this confidential gathering, that one of them should betray him, he does so in the presence of the party who should be guilty of that offence. The best and the Christian way to tell a brother his faults, is not to do so behind his back; it then comes to be calumny, even if it should be true; when done before his face, in a spirit of faithfulness and love, it is a

Christian duty, and there will descend upon it a Christian blessing. As soon as the disciples heard that one of them should betray him, they did not dispute it; they accepted the prophecy, however painful the fact. "They were exceeding sorrowful." One would have supposed they would have thought such a thing impossible; they did, I have no doubt, think it all but impossible, but they had confidence in Christ; they had learned to place implicit reliance on his word: one statement from the lips of Jesus outweighed a thousand impossibilities. They believed it was true, too true, and they were only anxious to know who was the man who could be guilty of so enormous an offence. Their anxiety to know the man, was only equalled by their sorrow at the crime. "They were exceeding sorrowful." No wonder that they were so. His life had been to them a shower of daily blessings; they had tasted their sweetest happiness in the sunshine of his countenance: whatever peace they realized—whatever instruction they had gathered—whatever bright hopes of coming glory they cherished, had been all instilled from his lips, and they felt it to be the sorest fact they had heard from his mouth, that one of them, so deeply indebted to his love, and so richly provided for by his beneficence, should be guilty of the great crime of betraying their Lord and Master. Sorrowful at the prophecy, they felt anxious to know who should fulfil it; they began every one of them to say, "Lord, is it I?" See here, what distrust of self!

Each disciple did not begin to say, "Lord, is it John? Lord, is it Peter? Lord, is it Matthew?" but each disciple, looking into his own heart, and fearing lest the seed of so great a crime should lurk in it, put the question, "Lord, is it I?" Yet is not this the very last question we are apt to put? Are we not more ready and willing to detect and discuss the sins of a brother, than to analyse our own hearts, and trace out our own sentiments? But the way to make practical and personal improvement, is to look little at a brother, to look exclusively to ourselves. The last that suspected himself was Judas: after each disciple had said, "Lord, is it I?" we read in a subsequent verse, that Judas, when he could scarcely conceal himself any longer, said, "Master, is it I?" The first to suspect themselves were the innocent; the last to suspect himself was the guilty one. His plans were not yet matured, or perhaps his intentions were not yet fully developed, or perhaps he was not yet prepared for so revolting and monstrous an expression of baseness and of ingratitude; but whatever was his condition at that moment, the last to suspect was the guilty one, the first to distrust their own standing and firmness were the innocent. Does not this teach us that he who comes to this table, not doubting his Lord's love, but his own unworthiness of it, is the person who is most welcome; and he who comes, not suspecting Christ's faithfulness, but suspecting his own strength, is just he who is in the best spirit, and

will receive there the greatest blessing? The evidence that we are not the children of God, is our never suspecting or doubting our worthiness of his love, or our fitness for fellowship with him: the evidence rather, that we are among the people of God, and that our hearts have been quickened by Divine love, is the fact that we suspect, not the faithfulness or the love of Jesus, or the excellence and beauty of his example, but our worthiness of the one, and our steadfastness in imitating the other.

After our Lord had thus disposed of all that was painful by making this prefatory remark, or rather by carrying on this prefatory conversation on the guilt of him who should betray him, we read, that as they were eating the passover, "he took bread, and blessed, and brake it, saying, Take, eat; this is my body that is broken for you. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Let any one take up the book known by the name of the Roman Catholic Missal, *i. e.*, the prayer-book used by the members of the Roman Catholic Church. Let him read the rubrics contained in that book, and spread over some eighty, ninety, or a hundred pages—especially the strange and grotesque ceremonial—what the priest is to do, and to say, and how he is to robe himself, and when he is to perform the great act which is the distinctive characteristic of the sacrifice of the

mass — and when he has done so, let him read the beautiful and simple words of the last supper, and then ask if the rite in the Missal has any likeness to the institution in the New Testament ; or if the one be in any sense the substance of the other ? If the account in the Missal be the Lord's supper, the statement in the Gospel of Saint Matthew must be something else. The two institutions are not the same ; the one is a beautiful festival, expressive of mutual love, and joyful and grateful confidence, appointed to commemorate the greatest fact ; the other pretends to be a stupendous sacrifice, an awful mystery, clothed in words new to a Christian, and perfectly different, in its minutest details, and leading characteristics, from anything that we find in any of the Gospels, or even in the works of early writers, or in the usages of the primitive Christians.

Why, it may be asked, did our Lord take "bread?" There is no more spiritual virtue in bread than there is in a stone, in a tree, in a flower. Its commonness was perhaps the chief reason. It is that which the richest must have, and which the poorest generally can have -- that which is in all countries accessible at all times : it is the simplest, and purest, and most universal element that man employs for the nutriment of his body, and it may be regarded as the most expressive symbol of the bread of life. He might, if it had so pleased him, have prescribed the annual collection and display of certain precious gems, or the placing on the

communion table of some fragrant exotic flowers, the most beautiful and costly, and either rite would still have conveyed the great ends for which the institution was appointed, and have constituted as expressly, if not equally, a commemoration of his dying love: but he has selected bread, and like all God's institutions, its sublimity consists in its simplicity. He took bread, and that bread he blessed, or, as it is expressed in another Gospel, "He gave thanks." He thanked God for all his covenant mercies, for his love, for his faithfulness, for what he had done, for what he had promised to do. He then "brake it," thus to denote his body broken for us, and he gave it to the disciples, those that were seated, or reclining round him, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body:" that is plainly, merely the symbol, the representation in every age in which it shall be celebrated, of my incarnation, or my being manifest in the flesh; and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it." It is remarkable that the word "all" is here introduced. Why is it so? Because, with prophetic eye, he saw that in the lapse of ages men, professing to be ministers of the Gospel, would withdraw the cup from the people, and tell them it was the Lord's supper, though there was no cup to accompany it. He therefore says in the one instance, "Take, eat; this is my body;" in the other he introduces a word omitted in the first, and says, "Drink ye all of it:" it is proof evident to all, that no man has

a right to take away that cup which the Lord himself has appointed. "For this is my blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins." He conveys the nature of his death in these words, "for the remission of sins." The death of Jesus was not the example of the faithfulness of a martyr, but a sacrifice, an oblation for the remission of sins. He shows what he considered the nature of the cup to be, calling it after the consecration, the fruit of the vine. "I will not drink of *this fruit of the vine*, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," referring probably to the kingdom set up and spread through the world after the day of Pentecost—that kingdom whose subjects are saints, and whose elements are "neither meat nor drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And then it is recorded, when they had sung an hymn, expressive of their gratitude, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Let me now notice the names by which this institution has been usually known. It is called sometimes the sacrament, that is, perhaps, a misnomer; it is not *the* sacrament, but *a* sacrament. There are two sacraments in the New Testament economy,—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; and to call it *the* sacrament is to miscall it. It is one of the two sacraments. This word is derived from "Sacramentum," the oath of faithfulness that a soldier took to his captain, or of allegiance which a subject took to his king. It is thus implied, in calling this institution a sacrament, that in parti-

cipating in it we solemnly swear allegiance to him—devotedness to his service,—and be ashamed of Christ who may, that we will not—and deny him who likes, that we shall glory in his cross—and disobey his commandments who will, we will keep them, and give currency to them.

It is also called the Eucharist. The meaning of the word eucharist is thanksgiving; it is derived from a Greek word, *εὐχαρίστια*, which means thanksgiving as expressive of gratitude. It is appropriately called the eucharist, because it is in this rite that we publicly express our gratitude to God for temporal, personal, and social mercies, as well as for spiritual and everlasting blessings—purchased by the blood, ensured in the promises, and bestowed upon us day by day in the name, and through the mediation of Christ Jesus. The name of this sacrament implies the feeling with which we ought to approach it. The feelings we ought to cherish, are those of the intensest gratitude; and if there be one spot in the Christian Church, at which there ought ever to be bounding hearts and happy faces, it is when we surround the communion table, and commemorate a love so rich that it never faltered, but ascended the cross, and died for us there, and rose again to the throne to plead for us. It is the hour for review of facts and blessings—for retrospect of all the way—for recalling how much each owes to his Lord—for meditating how much he has bequeathed to us. In the ancient passover, there were two great parts;

there was, first of all, the painful part, which was the killing of an inoffensive lamb, the shedding of its blood, the taking away of its life; then, subsequent to this act, which was the sacrificial or the painful act, was the eating of its flesh, after it had been roasted, by all the inmates of the house, and so, commemorating the deliverance of the first-born through the blood of the lamb, slain and sprinkled on the lintels. Thus the Israelites had two parts in that commemoration; first, the painful part, or the killing of the lamb; secondly, the pleasant part, or the feasting on its flesh. Now Christ took to himself all the painful part when he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross, and he has bequeathed to us only the pleasant part, the feast after the sacrifice, the pleasure after the pain, the grateful commemoration of his finished sacrifice; and therefore gratitude, not grief, becomes us. We are called upon to enjoy the pleasure, Christ having himself exhausted all the pain. The supper is the great eucharistic festival. It is with feelings and emotions of the warmest gratitude that we ought to draw near to that table, to take into our hand the memorials of his broken body, and of his shed blood. It is also called an ordinance, but an ordinance in common with prayer, and praise, and preaching. It is a misnomer to call it *the* ordinance; there are many ordinances in the Christian Church, and it is only one, though not the least important of them all.

It is also called the Communion. The meaning of this word is fellowship, intermingling together; and it implies, that when we surround that table, we cease to present ourselves in any of those capacities by which we are distinguished in civil life, and present ourselves simply as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, holding communion and fellowship with him, and in him with each other. The Lord's table is that sacred spot, at which all ecclesiastical distinctions, all sectarian disputes, all social and political differences, all that makes us differ from one another, should be merged and buried in the joyful sense of common gratitude, and in the dear and delightful reciprocities of common brotherhood,—by which we are bound each to the other, and all to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, when one is invited to come to the communion table, let it be recollected that it is not to join in an ecclesiastical communion, as some suppose, but it is to commemorate the Redeemer's death. Nor is it to come as churchmen or dissenters, but simply as Christians. There is no record in that first institution, of any other distinction known, recognised, or admitted there, except of those that were the chiefest of sinners by nature, brought to be the greatest of saints by grace.

We may draw near to that table, then, as to a gracious festival, a joyful commemoration; as to a scene in which gratitude is to be the predominating

feeling, and yet with that deep humility which ought never to be absent from the mind of one who recollects his sins, — how many ! his unworthiness, how great ! Christ's love, how real, and the forgiveness that he has extended, how rich, and sovereign, and undeserved !

## THE SUBJECT OF THE COMMUNION.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”—1 Cor. xi. 26.

When to the cross I turn mine eyes,  
And rest on Calvary,  
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice,  
I must remember thee!

LET us notice, first, the origin of the ordinance. It is not a ceremony instituted by man, but a sacrament appointed, prescribed, and authorized by God himself. The ecclesiastical officers of the Church may appoint a ceremony, the Lord of the Church alone may institute a sacrament. The two he has been pleased to institute are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. There is no other rite in the Church entitled to the name of a sacrament, or so obligatory upon us that to neglect it is a sin, and to observe it is a duty. The Apostle therefore states, “I received of the Lord.” This rite is of heavenly origin. It bears the imprimatur of the King; it has the authority of him who alone is the Lord of the conscience, the head of his true, and redeemed, and blood-bought Church, and competent to appoint those rites and institutions which are conducive to its progress in grace and in holiness. “That which also I delivered unto

you, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread." The time and circumstances in which Christ instituted the sacrament are alone evidence that Christ was more than man. Had he been mere man, he would have been so absorbed with thoughts of what awaited him on the morrow, that he would have had no feeling at his disposal, or sympathy to spare for others; every thought, and care, and anxiety would have been concentrated on himself, full of the nearing sorrow, heavy with anticipated woe. But Christ was divine, and though divine a sufferer, and that for us. He sacrificed himself that his Church might be saved. "He took bread." I have showed why bread was chosen: not because there was any spiritual virtue in bread, more than in a flower or in a stone; he took bread as the most common thing, that which the rich must have, and which the poor may have. He might have used some other formula; he might have appointed us to go in public procession once a year to a fixed place; he might have commanded us to read a certain chapter, or to worship in a certain attitude, or to comply with some particular form; all or any of these would have been the same as this sacrament, if he had been pleased so to consecrate them; but he preferred this: he took bread, the simplest thing, the most universal thing, so that the poorest congregation may celebrate this rite as well as the richest. "And when he had given thanks:" an act which is the origin of "the eucha-

rist," the name applied to the Lord's supper. "He brake it," to denote that his body was broken for us. "He said, Take, eat;" not, *look* at it; as if we had no personal interest in it. Angels look and wonder, but neither take nor taste; but to us he says, "Take," for you it is intended; "eat it," appropriate it to yourselves. "This is my body" — the symbol — the memorial of it — "which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." Some have put an interpretation on the words "in remembrance of me," rather different from the common one; some argue that it means, not "in remembrance of Christ," that is, to bring Christ vividly before our minds, but that it means "to put Christ in remembrance" of our wants, our necessities, his promises, his ability to save. I do not see there is any objection to this interpretation of the words, though I do not think that they strictly bear it, and if so the celebration of the Lord's supper would be not only a memorial of an absent Christ, absent in the body, but present in spirit, but it would be an act upon our part which is meant and designed, if this interpretation be correct, to remind Christ of all his promises and pledges to us. You ask, perhaps, does it not seem strange and unusual language, "to put Christ in mind of us?" It is so, but it is nevertheless Scriptural language. God himself says, "Put me in remembrance;" it is the description of the things of heaven adapted to the comprehension of the inhabitants of earth; and therefore, though strange

to us when first heard, it is neither unscriptural nor inconsistent with what God says to us. Still the all but universal interpretation has been what I confess seems to be the most natural one, namely, that it is a memorial of Christ; and is meant vividly to bring before us him whom the heavens must contain till the restitution of all things. I do not waste your time by entering on a doctrine which has been spread far and wide, monstrous and absurd as it is, called the doctrine of transubstantiation. I merely notice one single fact which seems to me to lie on the very face of the verse, and to furnish a complete extinction to that absurd and extravagant dogma. It is the words "in remembrance of me." Now memory relates to the past, we cannot be said to recollect a person who is present; we see him; but when we take this in remembrance of Christ, it implies that he is bodily absent. But if the doctrine of the Church of Rome be a true one, he is bodily present upon the altar to which the communicant approaches, and therefore the language "in remembrance of" is inapplicable to the ceremony as it is performed in the Roman Catholic Church. They have merged the precious sacrament which Christ has instituted in the pretended sacrifice which the priest has conjured up. The Church of Rome says it is both a sacrament and a sacrifice, which, however, cannot be: a sacrament is something that God gives to us, a sacrifice is something that we offer to God; if it be a sacrament it cannot be a sacrifice, if it

be a sacrifice it cannot be a sacrament. Let the Church of Rome take her choice; if she has a sacrifice she has what we can prove to be a pretended one, and no sacrament; if she has a sacrament she has a mutilated one at best, but cannot have a sacrifice.

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped.” He thus took what was used in the now departing economy of Levi, the passover sacrifice, making it to answer for the new and glorious economy of the Gospel. “This cup is the new testament in my blood.” How absurd would it be to render this literally! yet if you insist that the words “this is my body” are to be interpreted literally, you must also, in all fairness, hold that “this cup is the new testament in my blood” must be literally interpreted also, and the result of consistency in such interpretation will be the best disproof, endless absurdity and extravagance. “This do in remembrance of me.” Our Lord said respecting the cup, to his Apostles, “Drink ye all of it;” as if the words were prophetic, implying that whilst his command was so explicit, and our right to the cup so distinct, there would arise a party in the visible Church of Christ who would take away that portion of the beautiful solemnity, and render the other half the tradition of men, not the truth of God. “As often,” he says, “as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death until he come.” These

words comprehend the chief scope and design of the communion.

I believe that we associate in our minds with the Lord's supper, partly from early prejudice, partly from remaining Popery, partly from the popery indigenous to our very nature, and partly from many sermons addressed to us, ideas that are wholly foreign to this beautiful and hallowed solemnity. Many persons look upon it as if it were some awful and tremendous sacrifice, to draw near to which is to run the risk of everlasting perdition. Some think that God is there in the attitude of a judge, watching for the least faltering in the communicant in order to destroy him, rather than as a father waiting to receive and welcome even his weakest and most wavering child, freely to forgive him and heartily to embrace him: I believe that this has arisen, in some degree, from the infrequency of the celebration of it. In not a few of the country parishes of Scotland, it is celebrated only once a year: there may be difficulties in the way of the frequent celebration of it, in remote Highland parishes, but surely it might be oftener than this: the celebration of it once in the year only seems to me to be one of the very reasons why it has come to be looked upon something in the light of a Romish mass, rather than in that of a Christian and evangelical solemnity. I am quite sure that the early Christians celebrated it frequently; I do not say every Sabbath, because they were not able, in their circumstances, to meet together every Sabbath, but

I am all but certain that they celebrated it almost every Sabbath on which they could assemble together for public worship; we have records of its celebration in dens and caves of the earth, in subterranean recesses and catacombs, about Rome; and it has been remarked, by an ancient Father of the Church, that when the Church ceased to have wooden platters, and earthenware cups, and upper rooms, and had gold and silver communion-plate, and grand cathedrals, her spirituality seemed to have departed from her. In proportion as she became rich, in the same proportion she became cold, and unspiritual, and worldly, and carnal.

The special end of celebrating this solemnity is "to shew forth the Lord's death." When you come to that table, it is not to join a church. I have heard persons say, "I mean to join the Church." They ought to have joined it before. Baptism is our introduction to the visible Church; the Lord's supper is the sign or seal of our continued standing as members of that visible Church. We become members of the visible Church by baptism, not by the Lord's supper; and therefore to come to the Lord's supper in order to join a church, or to attach ourselves to a sect, is not to celebrate the Lord's supper according to Christ's appointment. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death;" not your sympathy with a sect, nor your approval of one ceremony or preference for another. The true communicant comes to show forth the Lord's

death. This is the great end ; but it may naturally be asked, is any truth symbolized in this ? surely something great must be meant that needs such a solemnity to embody it. It cannot be merely an ordinary death that we celebrate, nor surely can it be a mere commemorative rite which the Lord himself thought proper to institute in so solemn circumstances. The word “shew forth,” I may explain, literally translated, is “evangelize,” or “preach ;” and it means that just as truly as the minister by words in the pulpit, the communicant, by his approach to that table, preaches, proclaims, announces the Lord’s death. That is to say, he proclaims to all that witness that act, that he looks to Christ’s death as the greatest, and most important, and most precious fact in the history of the universe, and that all should listen, study, be interested in, and be saved by it.

In showing forth Christ’s death, the communicant may be said to show forth the *fact* of his death ; he asserts it as a great and mighty fact. The world may pronounce it a fiction ; some may mention it with scorn, others may treat it as the death of a criminal ; but he regards it as a great historic fact of unparalleled importance, worthy of being commemorated, perpetuated, and gloried in. You declare by your appearing at that table, that you believe that Jesus was born of a woman, made under the law—that he lived, a man of sorrows—that he died upon the cross. You assert your belief in his death as an indisputable fact.

The communicant shows forth, in the second place, the manner of his death. That bread, he tells you, which he takes, is broken; so his body was wounded and bruised for us. His death was no babe-like departure, scarcely to be distinguished from sleep; it was a death accompanied with agony that our finite hearts can never conceive, nor our human speech express; it was not the agony of the outward man, for I believe that was the least, but the agony of the inward man, an agony which no painter can embody, which no crucifixes reveal—which no imagination can fathom, which not Scripture language itself adequately expresses. His death was concentrated agony of soul: he describes it in Psalms xxii. and lxix. in no common words. Men slew the Son of God; men are said to have been the murderers of the Lord of Glory. He is said to have been nailed to a cross, to have borne our sins in his own body on the tree, to have been made a curse for us.

But we show forth at his table, not only the *fact* of his death, and the *nature* of his death, but we show forth also the *importance* of his death. I have said there must be something in the Redeemer's death that distinguishes it from the death of any other, however holy, when such a rite has been instituted in the Church, and celebrated age after age, and by millions after millions, in order that thus it might be commemorated. There is no rite appointed to celebrate the death of Paul, or Peter, or Polycarp, or Ignatius, or any other great

martyr, or inspired Apostle, or heroic Christian who lived and died for Jesus' sake. Such deaths are not thought so important, yet these were singularly good men, and great men; they lived as saints and died like martyrs; their deaths are not commemorated by significant rites, but the death of Jesus is so. If we read the account given in the Scriptures respecting it, we shall find that it keeps a place so distinct, so prominent, so peculiar, that every honest reader must infer that it was more than the death of a good man, or of a martyr—that, in short, it was the death of God manifest in the flesh. If we refer to the past, all the promises of two thousand years echo with intimations of it. "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head." "He was wounded for our transgressions," says Isaiah. "He was cut off, but not for his own sins," says Daniel. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow," says another. "He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." If we look again at the future, we hear John describing him in glory, as "a Lamb, as if it had been slain, seated on the throne." And again, it is written, the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the light thereof." I hear him spoken of through the whole Apocalypse, as the "King of Glory," seated on a throne as the central object of the love, the adoration, the joy of the whole redeemed multitudes in heaven. God's people regard him as their great trust and hope, "whom though now we see him not, yet

believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable." "His blood cleanseth from all sin;" "He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Thus Christ's death illuminates the past, consecrates the present, makes desirable the future; he is the Alpha and the Omega. All time is filled with his being, all space with his fullness; his death is set forth as something so peculiar, so distinct, so different from the death of all that have been or can be, that we must presume there is something in it infinitely important, and that when we celebrate this solemnity, we publicly and emphatically say so.

We show forth at that table not only the *importance* of his death, but also its sacrificial efficacy. In other words, just as we believe that the passover lamb was the sacrifice that was slain, and the feast that was celebrated at the commemoration of the deliverance of Israel, so Christ is the Lamb slain, and this communion is the feast after the sacrifice. We believe that Christ's death was the death of the Priest, the Prophet, and the King of his Church: we believe that he died not primarily or chiefly to set us an example, or to unfold a beautiful biography, an ever-enduring model of patience, and a death of unparalleled submission, but that he died a substitute for sinners; that he died the just, in the room of the unjust — that our iniquities were laid upon him, and that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; and that by his stripes we are healed. In other words, we declare our solemn

conviction when we draw near to that table, that Jesus lived and died, not merely as the example how men should live and die, but that he died to atone for our sins; that his death is our life—that his cross is the way to heaven—that his blood, and it alone, cleanseth from all sin. We not only express our belief, or show forth that he died a sacrifice, but we declare the perfection and completeness of that sacrifice. The Lord's supper is not a propitiatory sacrifice; it is the feast that has followed the sacrifice. When Christ said, "It is finished," the universe re-echoed his words; all propitiation closed, and all that are taught of God believe that it is so. There is not one sin on this earth which he has not expiated; no one sinner who is excluded from faith in him—there is nothing in the universe besides, by which one sinner can be justified, or one sin forgiven. "His blood cleanseth from all sin;" "He made an end of sin by the sacrifice of himself." The grandeur of the offering is only equalled by the glory of him that made it. He is the perfect propitiation for the sins of all them that believe; we want nothing more, and we can be satisfied with nothing less. There is nothing expiatory in our tears, in our afflictions, in our sufferings: there is nothing meritorious in our alms, in our good deeds, in our fruits, in our conformity—all that is atoning is in the blood of Jesus, all that is meritorious is in the finished righteousness of Jesus. When you draw near to that table, you say, we have no merit of our own,

but we plead his; we have nothing but sin, and we would not present ourselves were it not for this, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. Your retrospect rests upon the cross, as the place of a perfect sacrifice; and your prospect stretches to his crown, when he shall come again and receive you to himself, that where he is, there ye may be also.

Thus too, when you approach that table you not only show forth the *completeness* of that sacrifice, but you show forth the absolute necessity of it. You declare in dumb but expressive eloquence, that if Christ had not borne your sins you would have borne them throughout eternity, and have drunk of that cup of wrath, which eternity cannot exhaust. You declare your solemn and deliberate conviction, that rivers of oil, the death of your firstborn, all you have, could not purchase your salvation, or wash away one sin; and that if God had not so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, you would have perished for ever. You therefore approach that table, saying, "O Lord, when there was no hand to help us, and no eye to pity us, thine arm did help us, and thine eye pitied us, and we praise thee and glorify thee for all we are, and have, and hope for." You come to that table, declaring solemnly, that if Christ had not died for the chiefest of sinners, there would have been nothing for you but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." But more than this; you not only show

forth the efficacy and completeness of his death, but by taking that bread, and eating that bread, you declare your conviction that it is not enough that Christ died for sinners; you must personally close with him, and accept him as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If Christ's death were all Christ did, angels see this and know this as well as we; angels, if ever they are where a communion table is spread, may look and do look, "for into these things they desire to look;" but men must not only *look*, but they must *take* and *eat* of that feast. Angels can only look, for that expresses the extent of their interest in it; but sinners must do more than look; they must learn, they must eat, they must believe, they must live in, and on, and by Christ. Christianity is primarily a personal thing; there must be the personal surrender of the heart, the personal acquiescence of the judgment, the personal expression of the feeling, the personal leaning of the soul upon Christ and him crucified, before there can be salvation and perfect peace with God.

You ask, how long are we to do this? The answer is, "till he come." How beautifully, though quietly, do these words show that Jesus, when he expected to die on the morrow, contemplated his resurrection and the continuous existence of that Church which would last from the commencement of the world to its close! "Do it till I come." What mysterious accents to some of the Apostles at that moment! "I am about to suffer on a cross

to-morrow, and yet there is a time when I shall come again." The communion table acts as the connecting rite between Christ who came to suffer, and Christ who comes to reign. It is the connecting link, as it were, between Christ on the cross and Christ upon his throne. It connects the wreath of thorns and the diadem of glory. It bids us look back to the Man of sorrow, it bids us look forward and behold our King, coming no longer on an ass, and on the foal of an ass, but in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. This institution, then, is to be solemnized till Christ comes again; it is to continue in the Church so long as there is a Church upon earth, and only when he comes again will there be no more use for it. "Do this in remembrance of me," implies that Christ is at present bodily absent, and what confirms that interpretation is this fact, that it is to be continued only till he comes; when he comes he will be bodily present, and then it is useless to do this in remembrance of him. The glass through which we have seen darkly shall then be broken, the shadow shall be swept away; we shall then no more see through a glass darkly, but we shall see him face to face, and shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Such, then, is the Scriptural definition of this holy solemnity: you come to show forth the Lord's death. You that do not believe in the fact of his death, may not come. You that do not believe in the sufficiency of his death, may not come. You

that do not believe that you need an interest in the purchase of that death, may not come. You that are ashamed of that cross should not come. But you, the chiefest of sinners, wearied with the burden of your sins, and seeking rest—you who know what it is to have tears, and anxieties, and perplexities, and suspicions of self—you who are anxious to be rid of all this, and to have perfect peace and perfect joy—you are invited to come. That table is spread, not for those who bring their virtues to glory in them, nor for those who bring their sins to get sanction for them, but for those who bring their goodness and cast it at the Saviour's feet, as his creation; and for those who bring their sins, hating them, and to wash them away in the Saviour's blood. It is spread for imperfect sinners seeking to be perfect; for weak faith seeking to be strong; for cold love seeking to be warmed; for humble hearts that can say, "Lord, we perish, do thou save us."

## V.

## COMMUNICANTS.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.”—1 Cor. xi. 23.

Remember thee and all thy pains,  
And all thy love to me;  
Yea, while a breath or pulse remains,  
I will remember thee.

In a former chapter I have described the names by which this interesting ordinance is known — “the Eucharist,” “the Lord’s Supper,” “the Breaking of Bread,” “the Sacrament,” and, as it was frequently termed in ancient times, “the Mystery;” all of which words convey in varied phraseology, and by different allusions, the great truths which this institution was designed to represent. St. Paul received the knowledge of the institution, and was commanded to embody the mode in which it should be celebrated, not from man but from the Lord. “I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.” I have noticed the very interesting truth that lies underneath this record, that Christ, the author of it, is God. “The same night in which he was betrayed,” when a human heart would have overflowed with the deep sense of its own near suffering, on that same night, He

whose whole life, like his death, was vicarious, merged every anticipation of personal woe and agony, and occupied himself in providing for us, not an essential, but a subsidiary element of comfort, happiness, joy, and peace. So true was it that he was smitten that we might be saved, and that as never man spake like him, so never man lived like him, and never man died like him. "The same night on which he was betrayed," then, "he took"—what? Not gold, which the poor congregation cannot reach, nor expensive and precious gems, which "few and far between" can obtain, but he took that which rich men have, and which poor men may have—the common element of common bread. Why? because there was any virtue in that bread? No; there is no more spiritual virtue in bread than there is in a stone. He might have equally taken any thing else; it is his appointment and ordinance that makes it expressive of a meaning and of mysteries far beyond our apprehension. How little is said here about what is made so much of in other quarters—chiefly in the Church of Rome—the act of consecration! He merely "gave thanks," or, as in another Gospel, "blessed it," set it apart from a common to a sacred use. From his giving thanks it is called the Eucharist, which means "thanksgiving." And he said, "Take, eat; this is my body," *i. e.* this is the symbol of my body; a figure that frequently occurs in Scripture, to interpret which literally is to fill Christianity with monstrosities, and to depart to the utmost possible

extent from Scripture and common sense. So Christ says, "I am the Vine," "I am the door," "This is the Lord's passover," all of which are similar or analogous expressions to "This do in remembrance of me." "After the same manner he took the cup after he had supped, and said, This cup is the new testament in my blood." I have already called the reader's attention to the fact, that in the record of the institution of this ordinance contained in St. Matthew, it is added, "Drink ye *all* of it." There was prophecy in that utterance. He did not say of the bread, "Eat ye *all* of it," because none would dare to forbid the bread; but he saw in the long vista of coming years that the people would be taught that it was better and more expedient to withdraw the cup from the laity; and therefore he says, in anticipation of this, "Drink ye all of it," that you may know and claim your right; "for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death"—the fact of his death, the necessity of his death, the fruits of his death, the purchase of his death—"until he come." The Lord's supper is like a beautiful rainbow, reminding us of the covenant of God, one end of which rests upon the cross, and the other end of which rests upon the crown, spanning the mighty space between the pledge of bliss, the token of peace with God. Wherever and whensoever "ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death until he come."

I proceed to offer a few explanatory remarks on the relative meaning of this sacrament, and also to vindicate certain references which are very often misapprehended by communicants.

There is one characteristic by which the Lord's supper is known, which to my mind is extremely expressive; it is called "the Communion." "We believe," in the language of an ancient creed, "in the communion of saints." It symbolizes our union and fellowship, our common fall and common restoration in the sight of God. Therefore you not only show forth the Lord's death till he come; you not only express in the most marked and vivid manner the thankfulness that you feel to him for his great and precious benefits, but you also make evident your belief in your relationship of union and communion with all the people of God. The Apostle says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not *the communion* of the blood of Christ?" *i. e.* the communion, the participation in common of the benefits and blessings purchased by the blood of Christ; "and the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" *i. e.* our common participation of all the blessings of the incarnation of Christ. Thus, when we approach the table of the Lord, we all declare that whatever be the lines of distinction that sever us in the sight of Cæsar, there are no strong and distinguishable lines that separate us in the judgment of God. We all present ourselves at that table to eat of that one bread and to drink of that one cup,

leaning upon that one sacrifice, asking for the fulfilment of that one hope; and so we set forth before the Church and the world, our union each with Christ, and our communion each with the other. It is thus that you seat yourselves at a communion table. In surrounding that table, we do not avow that we are Churchmen, holding communion with the Church, or Dissenters holding communion with Dissenters, or Independents, or Presbyterians, or any other sect—these are all left outside; these are the faded robes that we leave behind us—but Christians, one with Christ and each other. There is but one robe that each wears at that table, that is the robe, “the first, the best one,” as it is called in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the robe of a Redeemer’s righteousness. He whose faith trembles, as it were, on the verge of extinction, and he who has faith that he could remove mountains, equally need it, and it is unto all, and upon all them that believe, and there is no difference at all.

There is a truly beautiful feature in this ordinance worthy of study. In the Old Testament economy, when the sacrifice, the ceremonial sacrifices of oxen and sheep and heifers were made upon the altar, the priests fed upon the flesh of the sacrifices that were offered on the altar. So the priests, in the language of the Apostle, “lived by the altar;” they that served by the altar literally and truly lived by the altar. In other words, it was the victim that was offered up as a great typical propitiation, on

which the priests, after it was prepared, fed and maintained their natural life; and this not without meaning. It is so with us: the great sacrifice has been offered once for all, complete, finished, never to be added to, nor to be subtracted from; and we who are priests—for all true Christians are priests, as it is written, “He hath made us a chosen generation, a royal priesthood”—and having now that access into the true Holy, which the high priest had of old into the typical Holy, draw near to this table, celebrate this holy festival, and feed our souls upon the fruits and the blessings, the righteousness, the joys, and all the purchase of that blood, by which we are redeemed; and we have access by faith into this sonship and fellowship in which we stand. We come, then, to that table to feed on spiritual blessings, received from Jesus, not to derive virtue from the bit of bread we eat, or from the little wine that we sip; to look above the cup and beyond the bread, and so to feel that in honouring God by complying with his prescription, he will be true to his promises, and pour out upon us blessings and benefits abundantly, above all that we can either ask or think, according to his own covenant which has been of old, ordered in all things and sure.

This feast proves to us—for it is a feast after a sacrifice—that God is now reconciled to us. What was the ancient mode in which they that had been enemies, celebrated the restoration of the peace that had been suspended? It was by a festival, or

by celebrating a feast, at which they that had been foes sat down at the same table, and drank of the same cup, and ate of the same bread. God has provided for us this feast; God has instituted for us this happy festival; and this institution of it is a pledge to us that he is at peace with his people, that there is no kind of quarrel, or controversy, or of strife between them. Just as God could stand upon the heights of Ararat, and point Noah's eye to the beautiful bow, and assure him that so long as that bow spanned the heaven and tipped the earth, so long no second deluge should happen, so God may point to this institution, which is only another symbol more expressive than the bow in the cloud, and tell you that as long as you observe that this festival exists, and you eat that bread and drink that cup, you have evidence that whatever be your suspicions, your doubts, your fears, your trembling, your dismay, on God's part all is reconciliation, peace, and good-will toward his own. And you who surround that table, once hateful and hating one another, feel that you are now made one by the blood of his cross, and have fellowship with God, and with his Son Christ Jesus, and with one another.

I regard the sacrament as a social ordinance: and I wish particularly here to correct what I think is a misapprehension. There is an idea prevalent in the minds of many, that the minister is to administer the sacrament to the individuals who partake of it. The language, if properly explained, is

proper, but it is very frequently grievously misapprehended. At the Lord's supper there is no officiating priest. Doing a priestly act, or putting into your hands a piece of bread that will act like an exorcism, or convey some mysterious and undefinable virtue, is not Christianity. The minister celebrates the ordinance as your servant for Christ's sake, and as a matter of order. *You* are the priests; we are all priests, and we surround that table as true priests, celebrating a social ordinance among ourselves, not receiving it from the hands of one who alone can communicate to it a virtue, which may render it a charm, a necromancy. It is a social ordinance; each having equal access to God, equal privilege, equal acceptance, equal right to draw near to the Holiest of all. I believe that the idea that has done the greatest damage to the Christian Church is the priestly; the idea that the minister is still a sort of priest, with priestly powers, and that he can do and communicate what others cannot. My dear readers, there is no foundation for such a pretension in the word of God; a sacrificing priest has no more business to stand at the communion table, or to preach from the pulpit, than the colonel of a regiment. There is no such officer in the house of God as a sacrificing priest; there is no such officer enumerated in the apostolic ministry in the New Testament. When Christ said, "It is finished," all priestly functions came to an end; and from the graves of the buried

Levites there rose a company of preachers and ambassadors of Christ.

Again, this ordinance is, as I endeavoured to show formerly, a corporate preaching of Christ and him crucified. From the pulpit the minister preaches the Lord's death in words; but when you approach this table, you too show, or, as it is literally translated, proclaim, or sound forth, the Lord's death till he come. You take, as it were, rightfully and by God's investiture, the function of preaching into your own hands, and embody by expressive silence the Redeemer's death; and that dumb and silent spectacle is preferred by Him who inspired the Bible, as not the least eloquent and expressive enunciation of the death, the atonement, and the sacrifice of Jesus.

We learn that this institution is of perpetual obligation. "Ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come," "in remembrance of me." The one we hope for, the other we are to recollect whilst we have a being; and he who does not come to that table plainly disobeys the command. I think that even those whose faith is faint, whose love is cold, but who can say that in all honesty and sincerity they love the Lord Jesus and rest upon him, and desire to live for him and die in him, should come. It is the act by which, as it were, they commit themselves to Christianity. It is the Rubicon, as it were, that severs us from heathenism; and by doing so, there is a new pledge and guarantee that you will live, and act, and die, as beco-

meth the Gospel of Christ. We owe it to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to observe this ordinance. We ought thus to strengthen, and encourage, and comfort each other: the communion of saints should be made actual. We should be Christians, not only secretly, but openly and publicly. And you know that when some profess openly their adoption of the Gospel, it encourages thousands more to follow their example. We owe it also to the *world* to celebrate and observe this ordinance. It is declared to be a preaching forth of Christ's death to the world; we ought to use and to avail ourselves of this, and of every other means of impression that God has placed within our reach. Hence it has been always the custom in the Church of Scotland, to invite those who do not communicate to remain during the service: she does not wish strangers to retire, she wishes them to remain; that as to believers it is a comforting ordinance, to them also, who are spectators, it may be an impressive, convincing, and converting ordinance; for when we draw round that table, we proclaim before heaven and earth our conviction of the fact, the necessity, the preciousness of the death of Christ.

Let me now look at some of the difficulties that occur to Christian minds, and prevent them from drawing near to this table, and commemorating the Lord's death. Many, for instance, have a deep sense of unworthiness, and make that a reason why they should not come to that table. The moment

that you feel that you are worthy, then is the moment that God will pronounce you unworthy. He that has the deepest sense of the deepest unworthiness, is he whose record in heaven is the greatest worthiness of all. In one sense, all are most unworthy; in another sense, he that feels so the most deeply is he that is most emphatically worthy. Did you go to Christ for pardon because you felt worthy? No; you went to him for pardon because you felt that you were utterly unworthy of the least of all his mercies. The same feeling with which you apply to Christ for forgiveness, is the best and worthiest feeling with which you can approach this table to commemorate his death, and to receive new blessings and benefits from him. Take care lest what you call your sense of unworthiness be not a cloak for much self-righteousness. Take care lest you are really looking for something to lean upon as you approach that table—something that you can lay before God, and plead as worthy of his notice at that table. They are utterly unworthy who bring their sins to that feast to continue in them, or who bring their virtues to glory and to rejoice in them.

But again, it is stated that “unworthy partaking is a great sin, and we are afraid of risking the commission of such a sin.” If the right way to avoid one sin is to commit another, we might be justified in doing so: but because it is a sin to communicate unworthily, does it cease to be a sin not to communicate at all? The plain inference

is, because it is a sin to communicate unworthily, let all pray for that wedding-robe, and that contrite heart, and that deep and genuine repentance, and that faith and confidence, which constitute the elements of worthy communicating. But the words "worthy," and "unworthy," I believe, are used here mainly in reference to the spirit, and object, and end of the Corinthians in coming to that table. They confounded it with a common meal; they came to it as to the enjoyment of domestic hospitality. They merged the sublime and essential truth, that there was a spiritual ordinance for spiritual men, and for spiritual ends; they came in a way unworthy, in a way so peculiarly so, that I think it is scarcely possible that we can imitate them. He who feels that in the sight of God he is unworthy of the least of all the mercies of a Saviour's purchase, and draws near that God seeking all that can make him worthy—comes in the right spirit, and will receive the most abundant blessing. If you come indeed with unworthy and unscriptural views of yourselves, thinking self to be somebody in God's sight; if you come with unworthy views of Christ, believing that he is there as a judge, waiting to condemn you, not as a Saviour, ready to forgive you; if you come with unworthy views of the sacrament itself, as if it could make atonement for your sin, instead of coming to commemorate an atonement, perfect, complete, once for all, and needing not to be repeated; if you come with unworthy views of sin,

thinking sin not sinful, and unworthy views of holiness, thinking holiness not happiness; then, indeed, you are most unworthy communicants. Or if you come with unworthy tempers, to display your superiority to others, or to get a passport to some civil office, or to comply with a decent and an ancient custom, or to be able to cheat upon the Monday with less chance of detection, because you have communicated on the Sunday with great appearance of devotion; if you come with such motives or such tempers, beyond all dispute you are unworthy communicants, and ought not to be there. But if you approach that holy table, mourning that there is in you so much of the old man, and so little of the new, and anxious to receive spiritual benefits from Christ in the ordinance—lamenting your weakness and coldness, and praying God to make you what he would have you to be; then fear not, for he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; he will nurse the one till it burst into flame, and he will strengthen the other till it becomes the organ of his praise, and of your thanksgiving.

But it is said, that persons who partake unworthily are “guilty of the body and blood of Christ.” What is meant by this phrase? It is certainly a very strong expression, “shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.” I do not wish to palliate the offence, the grievous offence, of unworthily communicating, but I wish that God’s word should be allowed to speak for itself, and that we should

not make its meaning stronger or weaker than God meant it to be. Many persons construe these words as if they meant that if we should come with some unworthy temper—which God forbid!—and so communicate, we are just as guilty as the Jews who crucified the Lord of glory, and put him to an open shame, and thereby set our seal to what the Jews did, and incur all the guilt which lay so heavy and so crushing upon them. The passage has really no such meaning. I have looked attentively at the words, and compared them with the original. The words are these: “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (ἐνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ αἵματος τοῦ Κυρίου); which literally translated, according to the use of these words in all classical writers, is, “will be justly chargeable with the sin of doing discredit to the body and blood of Christ, as symbolized on that table:” *i. e.* he that comes to that table in an unholy and unsanctified spirit, casts discredit alike on the Gospel, and on its ordinances, as far as his personal influence can reach, and leads others to do the very same thing. But it is also added, that part of the sin is “not discerning the Lord’s body,” and therefore I dread to approach that table. To discern the Lord’s body, as if it were bodily present, would be to believe in something near akin to transubstantiation. We are not called upon to see in that bread anything but bread, after consecration; nor in that cup anything but wine. Then you ask, what is meant by

not discerning the Lord's body? The word is the same as that translated "differ" in 1 Cor. iv. 7, "Who maketh thee to differ?" and the words strictly rendered mean, "not distinguishing that these are constituted by the word and prayer the signs and symbols of the Lord's body, by being set apart from their common use to that purpose;" but, on the contrary, taking them as if they were bread and wine for the hungry, and weary, and thirsty, wherewith physically to refresh their bodies. Literally translated, it is, "not making a difference between this sacramental supper, and the ordinary meals which you employ for the maintenance and strengthening of your ordinary life." But then you say, another expression here is a very awful one; "eating and drinking damnation." The word "damnation," in the ancient usage of the English tongue, meant simply "condemnation." Our translation was made, all are aware, upwards of two hundred years ago, and the language of England has altered since that time, though we rejoice to know that the authorized version of the Scriptures is still the standard of the purest and noblest English; hence the word "damnation" should more properly have been rendered "condemnation:" the context explains what is meant by this word; for how does the Apostle define this damnation? In verse 30, he describes what it is: "For this cause many are weak (weak in faith, that may be) and sickly among you," *i. e.* bodily diseased, "and many sleep," *i. e.* are dead. In other

words, we are told that God punishes unworthy communicating, just as he will punish neglect of the Lord's supper altogether, with those troubles and disasters, and judgments, that are here mentioned. But how does he conclude this? "For if we would judge ourselves," *i. e.* if we would examine ourselves, "we should not be judged." Now what is the nature of this judgment, or "eating and drinking damnation," the effect of which is, many are sick and weakly? We read that when we are thus judged, thus "weak and sickly," thus "eat and drink damnation," we are "chastened of the Lord," as children by a father, it is that we should not be condemned with the world. In other words, the believer is chastened by his Father for his unworthy communicating; and chastening by God is here not the punishment inflicted by a judge on criminals, or by a king on rebels, but the chastisement inflicted upon his children, when we permit ourselves to eat and drink at that table unworthily.

So much then for the expression, "eating and drinking damnation;" but then the Apostle says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Notice this point, which I believe has been overlooked in the common interpretation of the passage. The meaning is not, "Let us examine ourselves, and if we are not fit let us avoid that table, and if we are fit let us approach it;" but the Apostle takes for granted that if a man examine himself, he is fit;

that the fact of this examination indicates such sincerity, such anxiety, such desire to be what God would have us to be, that if a man examine himself, he is sure to come to the Lord's table; for his language is, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Wherever, then, there is sincere, heartfelt, honest self-inspection in ascertaining what is the ground of our trust, what the nature of our character is, on whom we lean, whom we imitate, whom we would glorify, with whom we daily walk in time, and hope to spend eternity; examining whether we are honest men when we repeat the Creed, and pray, and praise, and hear; honest in our convictions of the truth and infinite value of Christianity, whether we are followers of them who by faith and patience inherit the promises. If we so examine ourselves, prayerfully, impartially, truly, depend upon it we shall take the next step, which is to approach that table, and to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup." But many will say, "It is quite evident that we ought to go to that table, it is our duty, our privilege to go; an institution appointed amid such solemnities, and by such a Saviour, and so put forward and pressed upon us in the Gospel, ought not to be avoided or postponed; but then we are afraid that in our subsequent career we shall act unworthily, and so bring discredit upon the Gospel." It is a beautiful fear; it is full of promise, if any fear may be so described; it is a fear that reflects credit, in one respect, upon him that

feels it. A Christian heart does shrink lest it should say anything, or do anything, that could be the means of obstructing the spread, or hindering the reception of the Gospel of Jesus; but then, let us remember, the God that leads us to that table is the God that goes with us from it. The God that has been your strength to-day, has promised to be your strength to-morrow; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same next year that he has been in the last. May it not be a safer way to obey his command, and to have confidence in him—to do his will, and to lean upon his strength to enable you to do so? Cease, then, to suspect that he will not give you strength, and under this suspicion to reject the duty that plainly devolves upon you. Make the experiment; “God honours them that honour him;” confidence in God was never yet disappointed. He that goes a warfare at God’s charges, is sure to be the conqueror; he that goes out, leaning on God’s strength, is sure to persevere. “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” “My grace is sufficient for thee.” “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” “In six troubles I have been with you, and in seven I will not desert you.”

Many urge another plea: “Numbers neglect this ordinance; and therefore if we neglect it, we are only doing what numbers of others do.” Painful is the fact, only the more painful because it is indisputably true, that there are only about eighty thousand communicants out of the two millions of

people who form the population of London. It is a painful fact, that all the communicants of all Protestant denominations in London are under 100,000. In this great city, only about 100,000 go so far as to say by that act that they are the people of God, and hope to be happy with him for ever. But suppose that instead of being 80,000, there were only one hundred in London, this is no further business of ours except as matter for grief, motive to prayer, and reason for missionary exertion. Duty does not depend upon the numbers that cleave to it, it remains the same whether many or few accept it; "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." The number engaged in the commission of a crime does not mitigate in the least degree the enormity of it. The fact that there are few communicants, instead of being a reason for our not communicating, is a strong reason why we should seek to make that few more.

But some one may make the remark, "Salvation is not suspended on our communicating." I grant it is not; I grant we are saved by Christ's blood alone, but is it not at least doubtful whether that man has really, unreservedly, and fully given himself to the Lord, who lives in weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly violation of a commandment just as plain as this, "Thou shalt do no murder," and impressed under circumstances vastly more impressive and affecting? I do not say such will be lost, because I know what inconsistencies are found to be compatible with love to God in the heart; and

the more we know of human nature in all its phases, the more we shall be inclined to forgive, and the less we shall be disposed to condemn. But however I may forgive or forget, I may not disguise the responsibilities that they incur as hearers of God's word. "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" the evidence of love is obedience, and that man who wilfully, and knowingly, and deliberately lives in violation of known duty, seems to me not to give the evidence that I could desire of complete surrender to the Lord; on the contrary, he furnishes strong reason for suspecting that he is not yet walking in that narrow way that leads to life everlasting.

In coming to that table, let us bear in remembrance, we are not come unto Mount Sinai, "to the mount that might be touched, and to blackness, and darkness and tempest," and the voice of words so terrible that they that heard them begged that they might not be spoken any more; but we "are come unto Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, whose blood speaketh better things than that of Abel."

## VI.

## THE COMMUNICANT'S HEART.

And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And mind and memory flee ;  
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me.

“ My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”

PSALM xlvii. 7.

THE words at the head of this chapter contain a truth of the greatest value, and describe a condition rare as it is precious in the sight of God. A wavering, vacillating heart, is the possession of us all by nature ; a fixed heart is the privilege of all that have it only by grace. Man's heart lost its attraction to its great centre when he fell, and it has vacillated and oscillated ever since. It regains its attraction by grace, and remains fixed upon Him who is the object of its love, the model it would imitate.

A fixed heart, then, is the topic of our present study ; a heart fixed not upon a trifle, nor upon a prejudice, nor upon a passion, nor upon an idol, nor upon a sect, or a party, but upon the greatest things, eternal things, the most momentous things ; a heart, in short, that is the fulfilment of David's prayer, “ O Lord, unite my heart to fear thy name.”

Let us ascertain on what a communicant's heart is fixed, and why it should be so fixed.

First of all, a communicant's heart is fixed upon God. He cleaves to him as the supreme object of his choice; he does so, perhaps, not with the same fervour nor with the same conscious energy and fixity of purpose that David did, but certainly with the same fond and progressive approximation to it. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee;" "my heart and my flesh fail," but still, even when the heart faints and fails, its great foundation remains; "thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." A believer will fix his heart upon nothing that is beneath God; he will fix it absolutely and supremely upon nothing between this and the throne of God. Fix it upon the fairest creature upon earth, and that creature will fail you, and bitter will be the disappointment; or upon the joys, the pleasures, the profits, the honours, the aggrandisement of the world, and they too will flee from you, and the heart that has been fixed upon them will suffer in proportion to the stress it laid on these things: but if we can learn to fix our hearts supremely upon God, then when subordinate things fail, we may regret them in proportion as we love them, but while the great thing remains, we can still say and sing too, "God is our refuge and strength;" in him is our glory. Like the eagle, we shall fix our eye on no light beneath the noonday sun—we shall rest satisfied

by riveting our heart upon none short of Him who made that heart, and who alone is worthy of its confidence and love.

If a believer's heart be thus taught, it will fix its trust for salvation upon Christ, and Christ alone. If you rest to-day upon something you have done, and to-morrow upon something you have suffered, you will find that the foundation upon which you build will not only vibrate and shake with the successive feelings of which you are the subject, but that it will fail you in the very hour when it needs to be strong as adamant. But if your heart is fixed and made up upon this great point, that the only atonement in the universe on which it would venture to repose its hopes of salvation is the death of Jesus, and that the only raiment in which it would venture to approach God is that raiment, the best, the wedding robe, the linen white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints; if you can say that you have fixed your heart only upon Christ as your strength, and upon his finished work as your foundation; then the earth may shake, and the mountains may be carried into the midst of the sea, and all human props may totter, and all earthly confidence may be blasted, but your trust shall partake of the strength of the foundation on which it leans, and he that believeth on him shall never be confounded. You very often hear of certain fixed principles, *i. e.* matters that are settled, that are disposed of, that we cannot suffer to be again brought into discussion; and so

there are certain fixed conditions which constitute together "a fixed heart," and thus I want the reader, in thinking of the Lord's table, to examine himself to ascertain if he have that "fixed heart."

I have said, that a communicant's heart is fixed supremely upon God; you admit you do not love him as you ought, nor honour him as you ought, nor serve him as you ought, nor realize his presence as you ought; but your heart is made up upon this, that it would be your greatest delight if you could, and will be your firm and steadfast purpose to do what you can. Your heart is also fixed upon this, that "there is none other name under heaven whereby men must be saved;" you feel that you do not lean as you ought, that often your faith wavers, your trust fails, your confidence is shaken, but yet your mind is made up on this, that the only foundation on which you will lean is Christ's finished work, and that the only raiment in which you will appear before God is Christ's perfect righteousness; and give way what may, this never can give way in your hearts, that he is the only strength you *dare* trust, and by God's grace he shall be the only strength that you *will* lean on and trust for ever.

Your heart is fixed in this conviction, that the Bible is God's blessed word; and this is a very important conviction. Many people have a half conviction that it is God's word, and a half conviction that it is man's. Hence, when a geologist discovers some stratum in the earth, or some remarkable deposit, or

some species of fossil that was not known before, or some remains of extinct animals, the ichthyosaurus, the megatherium, or other fossil animal, indicating an existence many centuries before chaos, such an one feels his confidence in the Bible instantly shaken, and begins to argue, "If geology be true, Christianity must be false." Or if the astronomer applies his telescope to the skies, and in looking for vestiges of creation, cannot see, poor fool! in his ignorance or his infidelity, vestiges of a God, or discovers something in the sky that startles by its novelty, or makes an impression because of the limited nature of our knowledge and information, he comes to the conclusion that the Mosaic account of creation is wrong, and the half-convinced Christian comes also to the conclusion that the whole Bible must be uninspired. We may rest assured of this, that more knowledge will enable us to see that the geologist is wrong, and that Moses was right, and better telescopes will yet help us to discover that Genesis is true, and that the "Vestiges" only are mistaken. Such has been our experience in the past, and such it will be in the future. But a true Christian has settled in his mind that God's word is true, and has come to this conviction upon independent, distinct, and conclusive evidence; his heart is fixed on this, that God's word is true. When I am met with such pretended discoveries, and with such plausible objections, I answer, "On the clearest evidence, internal, external, historical, experimental, I have come to this conclusion, that

this book, called the Bible, is God's book. I have laid this idea upon the shelf, as it were; I have laid it aside among the great facts in my memory, and fixtures in my heart, which must live or die with the soul that contains them. I cannot allow discussion upon this point. It is with me a fixed and absolute principle, on which my mind has long been made up, and on which my heart is fixed. I have tasted its sweetness, I have felt its power, I have realized its comfort, and you can no more convince me that the Bible is false, than you can convince me that creation is without a Creator, or the human family without a Father." So, in a fixed heart, it is a fixed principle, "driven as a nail into a sure place," never to be dislodged, never to be surrendered, and that ought not to be obscured, that God's blessed word is truth. When prejudices and misapprehensions come, — when Satan, who is our ever-watchful enemy, casts in a doubt, and would make us believe that the Bible is a mere human composition, we must then remember our previous blessed conclusion, that this book is true, and that one of the fixed principles of our heart is, "Thy word, O God, is truth." If we have made up our minds on this point, we cannot consent to have the truth or the falsehood of the Bible constantly brought into discussion: if we believe there is convincing evidence that the Bible is God's word, that this point can be demonstrated beyond all possibility of doubt, then lay up this fact within you as settled; as not to be touched; as

a consecrated fact, a fixed principle, on which your minds are made up, and about which you cannot have any questioning, dispute, or discussion again.

In the next place, the believer's heart will be fixed in this other persuasion, that the Spirit of God alone can regenerate the human heart, and keep that heart regenerate, sanctified, and progressively so. If your minds are made up that the Spirit of God alone, who made the heart, has power equal to the transformation of it—that he alone who can raise the dead body, can quicken the dead soul—that no rite, nor ceremony, nor priest, nor bishop, can possibly change that heart by any magic words he can utter, or any beautiful rite he can perform, or any process to which he can subject you—then you will have fixed in your hearts one of those great fundamental principles which will make you proof against all the efforts of Popish and Tractarian seducers. Your answer to them will be, My heart is fixed on this great point that *He* alone who made the human heart can remake it; that none but he who has omnipotent power can renew it; and therefore I must look to him and to him alone, who acts with me, and, when he pleases, against me, to change that heart. And this conclusion in the creed of a Christian will not be a mere ecclesiastical tradition, which he accepts, because the Fathers held it; nor the mere conclusion of a logical argument, in which he is compelled to acquiesce; nor a mere hypothesis, which he may assume for orthodoxy or convenience

sake ; but it is with the Christian the result of experiment, the close of a personal process through which he has gone, a great truth that he knows to be true, because he has felt it to be peace in his conscience, holiness in his heart, and in both the transforming power of the Holy Spirit of God.

The believer will have his heart fixed, and rejoicing to obey every precept and command of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does Jesus say, "Ask, and ye shall receive?" Your heart is fixed, that it is your duty—your privilege rather, to pray. Does the Lord say, "Do this in remembrance of me?" Your answer must be, "My heart is fixed that it is my duty to do so, and if I have not the full preparation I could desire, I will with obedient hand, and believing heart, make ready ; and if I seek the spirit of preparation, God may be untrue to himself sooner than deny me the blessing which he has promised and sworn to bestow ;" and I solemnly believe that the reason we do not realize in our hearts all the blessings and benefits, the peace, the joy, the light, the love of the Gospel, is just that we do not first deeply feel our want of them, and earnestly, sincerely, and heartily seek them in the name of Jesus, and by the Spirit that he has promised. Does the Lord Jesus say, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another?" Your heart is fixed upon the duty of complying with it. Does he say, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?" Your heart is fixed, it

will be your delight to realize it. Has he "left us an example that we should follow his steps?" Your heart is fixed that your feet shall tread in his footprints, and his example shall be a pillar of light to you by night, and a pillar of cloud by day. Has he promised, "I will come again and receive you unto myself?" Your heart is fixed on that future coming, your hopes rest there; your brightest joys come from beyond the horizon, and you wait patiently for his coming, because his word encourages you to do so. Has he called upon you to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven?" has he taught you that the moment you become Christians, that moment you become missionaries? does he tell you that you are made the saints of God that you may become the servants of men? has he announced that every gift and grace you receive is not for self, for monopoly, but for the benefit and blessing of the rest of mankind? Your heart is fixed that you will seek to let your light so shine, you will pray that you may be made a blessing to others; and that wherever your name is pronounced, it may be pronounced amid the anathemas of the bad, if they like, but amid the benedictions and thanksgivings of the wise, the good, and free.

Such, then, are some of the points on which a Christian's heart should be fixed; such are the great, essential, vital truths, on which our minds should be made up.

Let me now show why our hearts should be thus fixed. The moment that man fell, that moment his heart broke loose from God, as the magnetic needle, when it comes under the influence of some foreign attraction, fails in its inclination to the pole, hesitates and wavers awhile, and then points in some other direction. So it is with man's heart: it parted with its great attraction at the fall; Christ died to restore it to its lost attraction, for he declares, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;" and we are thus drawn to God when we see the infinitude of his love. We then taste its sweetness and feel its power, and are conscious, from our happy experience, that Christianity is not a dream, but a reality, and vital religion not a name, but a substance; and so our hearts, touched by his Spirit, are restored to their first attraction, and rest upon him who is the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

I conceive our hearts should be fixed, because nothing is less comfortable to ourselves, or less useful to others in its influence, than a vacillating, unsettled, and unfixed heart. The man who is blown about by every wind of doctrine—who, in popular language, "has no judgment of his own,"—who does not know on what side to rally—who halts between two opinions—who has one mind to-day and another to-morrow, a third the next day, is the man whose influence on society is the least possible, and whose comfort and enjoyment must be very small indeed; whereas a man who

has fixed and permanent principles in his soul within, and his life sustained, animated, and directed by them without, who is liberal to all that differ from him in details, but unbending and unyielding in his maintenance of mighty truths, great principles, and doctrines,—such a man, even by those who cannot coincide with him, is nevertheless respected and revered: and fallen as humanity is, consistency and force of character still command its homage.

Everything in the Gospel is fitted to fix our heart. The Bible is of all books the most decided. This has always been to me one of the subordinate proofs of its divine original. A man who is not sure will always speak in a subdued tone; he will guess, he will hope, he will surmise, and suspect. But in the Bible we do not find anything of this kind. There is no vacillation, there is no appearance of uncertainty: the language of the Lord of Glory is, “You have heard it said, but *I say unto you.*” The language of the prophet is, “Thus saith the Lord,” “Thus it is written.” The Apostle says, “I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.” Let a witness be examined before a court of justice: if he hesitate or waver, you may be sure there is something in his testimony not perfectly sincere; but when everything is stated with an unfaltering firmness, the impression is forced upon your mind, he is speaking the words of conscious soberness and truth. So it is in the word of God: truths the most startling in

their nature, are there pronounced to be unquestionable and indisputable. Great facts, that ought by their nature to agitate and electrify all, are here stated in the simplest but at the same time the most decided language. Great doctrines, such as never dawned upon the minds of mankind, are here announced by the illiterate fishermen of Galilee, in such terms and in such a manner as to satisfy every rational inquirer, that "they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And if, then, Christ spoke thus decidedly—if the Apostles wrote thus decidedly—if everything in the Bible is fixed and nothing is loose, for even what is non-essential or circumstantial, is large and comprehensive, not loose,—then let our hearts be fixed like the charter that contains their hopes, and let us pray that we too may be able to say with David, "O Lord, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed."

Such fixity of principle, of feeling, of conviction, in one word, of "heart," is fitted, as has been proved on every occasion, to do the greatest good. That man is not the great benefactor of his age who has random and evanescent impulses of benevolence in his heart, and who, under some powerful impulse, makes a great sacrifice or does a noble deed: but he tells upon society—moulds and shapes mankind—makes himself to be felt while he says nothing—and causes his name to be secretly blessed though he knows it not, whose goodness is persistent, whose benevolence is a steady, accumulating force, growing in strength, in energy, and in

devotion. That man who maintains what he knows to be right, and cleaves to it—who takes up the creed that he knows to be truth, and stands by it—who sees the duties that he feels to be divine, and holds by them in the storm, and in the sunshine—whose love does not falter in the worst of circumstances, nor weary in the best, and whose creed, like his love, is not a thing to be changed by philosophers, or to be beaten down by controversialists, but fixed, immovable, and anchored, as it were, amid the attributes of Deity—such a man exercises an influence upon the world, that is felt by all around him, and he approximates while he exercises that influence to the great model set before him—Christ Jesus. What is more fixed, or more steady, or more persistent—I speak of his example only,—than the whole life of our blessed Lord? Mark the fixity of purpose concentrated and embodied in these simple words, “My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father which is in heaven?” What resolution, what fixity of purpose, is indicated in these words! Notice, too, the very same trait in the Apostles. When they were menaced, and told they should be called upon to die for what they were doing—what was their answer? If the world had had to deal with those men whose creeds, like the chameleon, take their colours from their convenience and from a consideration of the times, Christianity had perished in its cradle: but the Apostles, when thus threatened, had their hearts fixed, and therefore their minds

were made up: their manly answer was, "Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." And the Apostle Paul, when he was besought by those that loved him, and were anxious for his safety, not to go up to Jerusalem, he might have replied, "Well, I ought not lightly to peril a life that seems to be useful: I ought to respect the entreaties of my friends; I ought not to break their hearts." But he did not say so; he never thought of himself: the Apostle's labours were, in a measure, like the Redeemer's death, vicarious, "each stepping where his comrade stood the instant that he fell:" Paul therefore replied, "What mean ye to weep and break mine heart?" there was the sensibility of the *man*, but combined with it the fixity of heart of the *Christian*; "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." How beautifully does the sensibility of the human blend with the fixity of purpose of the heavenly! a Christian will have all the sensibility of the man, for Christianity does not demand that we should be Stoics, or that we should kill human nature; but then the sensibility of the man will be invigorated, and, at times, subdued by the mightier attractions of stronger motives, and of brighter hopes. What fixity of heart was there in John Knox, the child of another age! If the Apostolic age was the golden, the Reformation age was the silver age of Christianity: this last had its defects, and Knox too had his, for it is too true, he did not

give up the persecuting lessons he had learnt,—but, with that single subtraction, he was a man of noble faith, devoted life, and especially of great “fixity of heart.” Hence the Regent Morton pronounced the inscription for his tombstone, “Here lies the man who never feared the face of clay.” When Martin Luther was summoned before the Diet of Worms, and was told that if he entered that city he would be destroyed, as soon as he had crossed its threshold, his reply was, in his own stern Saxon way, “Though there be as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the houses, yet I will go there.” You will find, indeed, in every man who ever did the world any good, the great truth actualized, a heart fixed.

Such fixity of heart is no mean element of the greatest happiness to ourselves. For instance, when one’s heart is made up on this principle, that “God reigns,” that whatever is done in providence he does—that we cannot make one hair of our own head white or black, or make to-morrow different to us in providence from what to-morrow is fixed to be—then what happiness does this give us? So long as a man sees to-day chance, and to-morrow God, in what betides him; so long as he sees in this misfortune somebody’s misconduct, and in that the misconduct of somebody else—so long he must be miserable. But when he can look above the smoke, and see the sunshine that illuminates all—when amid the din and roar of the revolving wheels of this world he can hear God’s voice

sounding above all, saying, "It is I—be not afraid," what happiness does he then feel! What peace does he realize who is sure that God, whose omnipotence restrains all, has benevolence that will inspire all, and that all things work together for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose! Well therefore does the Apostle say, "The man that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed!" and well does Isaiah say, "The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest," but "the work of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever." Fixity of principle, fixity of love, fixity of trust, fixity of hope, are followed by great peace, the peace which keepeth our hearts in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

This fixity of heart is specially demanded in the day in which we live. It has often been remarked, that every one is wont to say that his own age is the worst; but I am sure that there never was an age in which everything was more rocked and shaken and convulsed than the present, in which so many things that were the construction of ages were pulled to pieces in a day—in which subjects that were formerly treated with respect and reverence became so speedily, many of them, the objects of contempt, and all of them, the subjects of a new ordeal. Never before were things so floating and so driven about by the restless waves of a restless and an agitated world. Never was there a day

in which scepticism was so busy, and all vile and pernicious principles were so steadily and perseveringly propagated, or so ably and splendidly advocated as the present; and if ever therefore there was a time when we should have fixed principles, fixed affections, fixed trusts, fixed hopes, it is that in which we live. Let me then ask you to make up your minds what is truth, and then cleave to that conviction: make up your minds that this is God's book, that these are God's truths, that it is indeed the very Gospel, and then stand by it; and so standing you will not only realize the peace that flows from within, but you will exercise an amount of beneficent influence which will tend to the glory of God, and be conducive to the interest of souls. But let me entreat you, my reader, and every reader, not to let your heart be fixed upon anything unworthy. In reference to all that is subordinate in the Gospel or in the Church, have preference, decided preference if you like, but let your heart be absolutely fixed upon great, eternal, and essential truths. It must not be the fixity of bigotry or of pride, or of passion, or exclusiveness; we must be in non-essentials yielding as the osier or the willow before the evening zephyr; in essentials, riveted and fixed as the gnarled oak, whose fibres are entwined amid the rocks, and whose lofty head stands beautiful in the sunshine, and majestic amid the storm. You must in all things be most *liberal*, but never dare to be *latitudinarian*. Concede, by all means, the largest prejudice if it will do a brother

good ; but compromise not one vital principle on which your heart is fixed in the sight of God. Fixity in all that is essential ; looseness, if you like, liberality certainly, in all that is non-essential. I care not so much if a brother belong to another church, if he belong to Christ. I care not so much that he worships in another form, if he worships "in spirit and in truth." You have your preference ; retain your preference, be thankful for what you believe a privilege, and show that you have a superior form, if you so think, by showing that it has cherished in you superior character, liberality, and love. In the language of a very ancient Christian writer, "In essential things unity, in non-essential things liberty, in all things charity." Fixed let us be in resistance to Satan, fixed in antagonism to sin, fixed in seeking salvation as the great end of our being ; fixed in our maintenance of truth ; fixed in exhibiting holiness as the greatest happiness ; fixed in preaching the Bible, making known the Gospel, and winning souls. The last thing surely that should be left loose and unsettled is your own everlasting state in the sight of God. Why, what are seventy years of time compared with seventy times seventy millions of millions of years in eternity ? and is it not a most strange thing—an almost unintelligible thing, upon any other supposition than this, that man's heart is altogether perverted and diseased ; that he should fix everything upon earth, his property, his relationships, his business, his prospects, his connexions, but leave loose, un-

determined, unsettled this great question, "Is eternity to be happiness or woe to me?" Those whose minds are not made up upon this will be charged at the judgment-seat with the most sinful inconsistency. If you had any suspicion that you were labouring under some fatal disease, you would not leave an eminent physician's house unvisited till he had given you his opinion whether that disease were fatal or not; and when you thus care about the body (and about which you justly care, for the anxiety you show is perfectly proper), all that I ask of you is, if you thus care for the casket should you not think something about the safety of the gem that is within? If we are thus anxious about the tenement should we not think something of its immortal inhabitant, which is not extinguished when its tent is struck, but only changes a temporary for an eternal habitation? There is not a merchant in the city who does not know at this moment, or if he does not is very restless till he does know, whether he is solvent or not. It is strange then that we who are born insolvents and bankrupt in spiritual and eternal things, will not take the unsearchable riches of Christ that will make us rich for time and for eternity. If it were, however, impossible thus to fix the heart, or if it were a very difficult matter, I should not urge it so much; but it is not impossible; thousands *have* thus fixed their hearts. It is not difficult: you have only to look the greatest difficulty in the face, and it disappears. Never forget this, that difficulty

is great in proportion to its distance ; and danger is great in proportion to our ignorance of it. When you meet the difficulty, *it* is frightened, not *you* ; if you have a fixed heart when you meet the danger, it gives way, not you ; and if you will ask the Holy Spirit of God to teach you, and lead you, and guide you, you too will be able to say with David, " O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed."

It is with such hearts I bid my people come to the Lord's table. All I have said is to help every one to fulfil the Apostle's prescription, " Let a man examine himself." When you come to that table, can you say this, " O Lord, my love I feel often to be cold, my heart to be often as an icicle, my mind beset with prejudices, my hands too full of this world's business, my trials often too crushing for me, not because they are so heavy, but because my heart has so little of thy love, thy strength, thy spirit within it ; but, O God, this I can say, that my heart is fixed on this, that to love thee is my greatest duty, to know thee my greatest privilege, to trust in thee my greatest peace ; and that I look for a heaven not only where there shall be no more care, nor trouble, nor trials, but where there shall be no more sin, as the sweetest, brightest, dearest hope, that is vouchsafed to me here below. I can say this, that though I am very far from what I ought to be, there can be no doubt about the side on which I am ; all my sympathies are with thee, all my affections thirst to be concentrated upon

thee ; and if the question were asked me from the judgment-seat, ‘ Who is on the Lord’s side ? ’ with all my conscious coldness, and feebleness, and weakness, this I do know, and am sure of, that I am on Christ’s side, and I would sacrifice all rather than be found otherwise.” I have heard many persons complain that they have not that ardour of feeling in reference to God that they think they ought to have ; their complaint is just, but let us never forget that there is here a distinction ; there may be love in principle when there is very little love in passion. Love may be in some minds a principle, in others a passion. For instance, your love to your parent is not a consistent, ardent, enthusiastic, filial love, of which you are ever conscious as a burning feeling. It is often said, the moment a man knows he has a heart, it is a sign that he has some disease in it : so it is with love to your parents. As the perfect action of the heart or the healthy part of the lungs is almost imperceptible, so love to our parents is not mere enthusiastic excitement — which would be evanescent : it is a vital principle ; and let something call into play the love we bear to our parents—let them be placed in danger or in difficulties—then, if we have any love at all, it will show itself ; it will then be seen whether we have affection to our parents or not. It is so in some degree with love to God ; there may not be that depth and ardour of love which there should be, which is assurance, and therefore happiness, if we have it : but you can say

this, that cold as your love is, wavering as your trust is, vacillating as your affections are, you would not part, if called upon to do it, with the little Christianity you have for ten thousand worlds. Were one to offer you ten thousand pounds to burn the Bible, resign your place at Church, and cast Christianity to the winds — then would you show by your burning rejection of the bribe that you have a love to God that no earthly temptation can dissolve, nor all the seductions of the world prevail to extinguish. Can you say that, however cold your love, however feeble your faith, however sickly your affections, you more than hope, you believe that you are in the fold of Christ, that you do belong to him, that you glory in his cross, that your greatest happiness is in knowing him and loving him, and that it is your greatest sorrow that you cannot love him as you would, nor serve him as you ought? If this be your feeling, come to that table, for “He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax;” he will strengthen you if you come in obedience to his will.

## VII.

THE PASSOVER LAMB AND FEAST, OR, CHRIST AND  
THE COMMUNION.

Bread of the world in mercy broken,  
Wine of the soul in mercy shed,  
By whom the words of life were spoken,  
And in whose death our sins are dead.

Look on the heart by sorrow broken,  
Look on the tears by sinners shed,  
And be thy feast to us the token,  
That by thy grace our souls are fed.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

It is plain that there is in the words at the head of this chapter, undisputed reference to a memorable transaction in the history of Israel; that transaction is recorded in the book of Exodus, and as it is extremely interesting, as well as instructive, especially in connection with our subject, I will transcribe it.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all

the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I

am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."—Exodus xii. 1—14.

Such is the simple record of this memorable transaction, the great details of which are, I doubt not, familiar to all. Pharaoh, and those that were around his throne, were determined not to let the children of Israel escape out of the land of Egypt. God had a purpose stronger than Pharaoh's, and he resolved that the children of Israel should escape, and that Pharaoh himself should acquiesce in that escape; we read accordingly of successive judgments poured upon the obdurate and resistant monarch. First, the waters of the river, regarded as the national god, were turned into blood before his people's eyes. Next, all the cattle were smitten with pestilence and disease; the very dust beneath their feet, on which they trod, was quickened into hostility against them; and yet, notwithstanding these so manifest judgments from heaven, Pharaoh's heart grew harder, and his determination not to let Israel go became, if possible, more fixed. God, then, according to his plans, having seen all these judgments fail, resolved to employ a yet severer one, that should pierce an avenue to every

heart, and find its response in the depths of human nature, and therefore succeed where all besides had failed, in rousing Pharaoh to submission and a sense of duty. He commanded an angel, in the depth and stillness of the night, to spread his wings upon the wind, and move through every street the most public, and every alley the most sequestered, and breathe into every house in which a first-born Egyptian was, and in one hour, in one instant, to fill every home with lamentation and weeping over the first-born struck dead. This he did. It was a night not soon to be forgotten; and the recollection of it was to be kept, we are told, a memorial for ever. In that night, so disastrous in the experience of Egypt, when one family seeing no symptoms of disease the day before, saw the first-born fade in an instant like a flower frost-smitten, and when each family rushed forth to seek sympathy from its neighbour, and met its neighbour rushing to seek sympathy from it, the suddenness, and speed, and intensity of the stroke, must have made them feel the catastrophe only the more terrible. One wild shriek rose from every Egyptian home that night, and the sun dawned upon a land filled with sorrow and lamentation and mourning. But in the midst of this havoc, there was one great exception, one class which was spared. Every Egyptian household had its first-born smitten, from the king upon the throne downward to the meanest of his captives: but Israel's first-born sons were spared; and the reason of their being spared was not, we are

told, their national existence, but their personal acceptance of, and interest in the shed blood of the lamb that they had slain. Each Israelite was commanded to take a lamb; each home or family a lamb and slay it, and sprinkle its blood upon the lintels and door-posts of the house, and they were told that when the angel went through Egypt, he should not dare to enter one single house, however mean or poor, on the lintel or door-post of which, he saw sprinkled the blood of this lamb. I can easily conceive the mingled feelings and emotions of Israel that night. I can conceive that, knowing the judgment, and having adopted the defence, some doubted that evening if even the blood would shield them, and as they doubted, their dread of the approaching night became more terrible; but I can conceive that there mingled with that dread the recollection that the God of Israel had ever been true to his promise, and the hope that He would even then be their refuge: and when morning dawned, the safety that they tasted awoke songs of gratitude and joy, such as had never been heard in Egypt before. It seems to me that we have an instructive lesson in all this. If Christ be our passover, a Christian's safety is not shaken by the fears, the doubts, the dismay that he sometimes feels. The fears of the inhabitant within did not make the angel cross the blood-besprinkled threshold, and smite him. The safety of the Israelite rested not upon the strength of his faith, nor upon the intensity of his peace, but upon the naked fact

that the blood was sprinkled on the threshold. So it is, blessed be God, with us. When you begin to fear that you will not be saved, your salvation is not shaken in the least degree by that. When you begin to be agitated, perplexed, and alarmed, you dishonour God, and injure your own peace, but your safety rests upon the naked, simple fact, that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,” in other words, Christ Jesus and him crucified is the great passover of Christians. But let us look at this history. Was it a lamb that was selected? Christ is constantly spoken of as “a lamb without spot”—“a lamb slain from the foundation of the world”—“he was led as a lamb to the slaughter”—“ye were redeemed by the precious blood of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” In the case of Israel it was the literal blood of a literal lamb sprinkled on the literal or physical door-post that secured to Israel a literal deliverance from physical or bodily death. The parallel is complete. It is the efficacy of the blood of Jesus sprinkled on the hearts of his people by faith that secures to them a spiritual deliverance from spiritual death, and all the effects of sin for ever and ever. The angel of death passes through our land day after day in the shape of consumption, sickness, and disease of every description. Every swing of the pendulum sends a soul to the judgment bar. When we meet in church at eleven, before the service closes, hundreds and thousands throughout the world shall

have been summoned to the dread tribunal of God. In this vast metropolis a thousand per week, or about a hundred and fifty per day, pass to the judgment-seat of Christ. We need no angel, like the angel who devastated Egypt, to pass through the land and smite us; there is a constant current of immortal souls rushing to the judgment-seat of God; therefore, the question occurs to us, if the angel of death thus moves with unwearied wing, and if there are mown down day by day hundreds upon hundreds who are borne to the judgment-seat of Christ—what is their trust? what is their hope of deliverance? Is it the blood of the Lamb, or is it something that supersedes, or that conceals it, or is made a substitute for it? Nothing is our safety but the blood of Jesus, that is our faith in Christ, our personal interest in this fact, that his blood cleanseth from all sin—our personal acquiescence in it expressed to God when no ear can hear but his—this is our salvation without money and without price, and never to be taken away. It is not baptism that saves us; it was not circumcision that saved the children of Israel; it is not a new heart that saves us, precious as a new heart is, true as it is, that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Yet it is not the new heart that is our safety in the sight of God. When the angel passed through Egypt he never looked into the interior of the house; he did not try to ascertain if they were rich men or poor men, or good men or wicked men, or unregenerate or

regenerate men ; the mark that arrested his regard and repelled his touch, was simply, exclusively, the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the lintel. It is true, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;" true it is, "go and teach all nations, baptizing them;" but it is no less true that neither the one nor the other is our safety. Our safety rests on this fact alone, Christ Jesus is our passover,—his blood is upon our consciences,—his sacrifice is accepted by us. But you say, how can his blood reach our consciences? I answer, when I speak of the blood of Jesus, I do not mean his literal blood. I doubt not that some of that precious blood, when the spear pierced his side, and when the thorns tore his brow, fell upon the soldiers below, and sprinkled them, but without exerting any saving efficacy; and if at this moment the literal blood of the Lamb that was crucified on Calvary were preserved in the midst of our land, reverence to Jesus would lead us to bury it in the earth. It has no efficacy, it could have no virtue. What I mean by the blood of Christ is his atoning death,—his dying, that we might live — his suffering, that we might rejoice; and what I mean by salvation is the acceptance of this truth, that he bore our sins and carried our sorrows, that by his stripes we are healed, and that his blood cleanseth from all sin, and that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. We cannot make this too plain or too distinct. Precious, I say, as the new heart is, precious as it is to be new men, essential pre-

requisites as these are to the kingdom of heaven, yet these are not the ground of our safety, or the element of our deliverance. It is exclusively, and, blessed be God, it is sufficiently and completely, the blood of Jesus Christ our Passover.

But let me notice a distinction. It was of no use that the Israelite family killed the lamb, or that they feasted on its flesh, if they did not sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts. It was no safety to them that a lamb was slain in the midst of them; the safety to them that night was the blood sprinkled by the persons within upon the threshold without. It is no less true that it is to us only an aggravation of our guilt, and not an element of deliverance, that Christ has been sacrificed, if we do not personally, each for himself, in the depths of his heart, lay hold of the blessed efficacy of that blood as the only ground of deliverance; and lay it before God's throne as the only hope of our safety; and seek salvation for no reason in the heights above, or in the depths below, but on this account alone, that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. That blood was to the Israelites the pledge of safety during the night, the hope of deliverance when the morning should dawn. This better blood is the ground of our safety now, and the foundation of our hopes of admission into not literal Canaan, but that better land where perils shall be no more. If this then be true, that Christ is the antitype of the paschal lamb, or that which takes the place of the type that has faded, we here-

by ascertain the true meaning to be attached to the death of our Lord. Was the immolation of the paschal lamb a propitiatory sacrifice? Can it be said by any man reading the Bible, in the possession of common sense, that the lamb was slain as an example? We know that it was no example of anything on earth. It is never referred to as an example. There is nothing in it that we are called upon to copy, or to imitate. It was slain simply and plainly as a sacrifice. And the Greek word which is here translated "sacrifice," means to kill or slay as a victim for sacrificial purposes. If this be so we must infer that the death of Christ was also a sacrifice. The passover lamb was ever afterwards slain in the temple in the place of sacrifice; it was slain by the competent priests, and after the sacrifice its blood was poured out as an offering, to indicate that it was meant to be a sacrifice. God's great design in this as well as in other kindred institutions of the Mosaic law, was to rivet upon the hearts of mankind, this lesson, which they were slow to learn, that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins. If Christ be the antitype of the paschal lamb, Christ died as a sacrifice for us. His death was expiatory and atoning. He was there not as an example of a martyr's patience, or a monument of a martyr's suffering, but he was there as the great sin-bearer of the world — he was made a curse for us, a propitiation for our sins, and he bare our sins in his own body on the tree; on him were laid the iniquities of us all. It seems to me utterly impos-

sible to read the New Testament without coming to the conclusion, so clearly indicated throughout, that Christ's death was that of a sacrifice. If it was not, the whole language of the New Testament is eminently exaggerated, and singularly calculated to mislead. The blood of Christ is said to cleanse from sin : we are said to have redemption through his blood : we have access to God by his blood. He is declared to be our Passover ; we are redeemed by him ; all which language is that which describes sacrifice. If his death was not a vicarious and atoning sacrifice, all the language of the New Testament is plainly fitted to mislead us.

But, it may be asked, perhaps, was this sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ inevitably necessary ? It was, but not, as some have imagined, to make God love us. This was not the end of Christ's death. This would imply a change on God's part, which would be inconsistent with the attributes of him who is unchangeable. Christ died not to make God love them he hated, but Christ died because God so loved them who hated him. It was out of love to sinners that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Yet many persons have the common notion, that Christ is the ground on which they draw near to God in order to get the wrath of the Deity turned into love. Such is not an evangelical truth. On the contrary, Christ died not only to be the channel through which God's love must reach me, but he died to be to me a

living and lasting expression of the height and depth of that love which gave him to die for me. It was necessary that Christ should die, not to make God love me, but to express God's love to me, and to form a channel for the outpouring of that love which could not otherwise reach me. If God's love had expressed itself in forgiveness to me without an atonement, his justice would have been dishonoured, his truth contradicted, his holiness outraged, and the universe would have learned the lesson that sin and holiness have no essential and eternal distinction, and that God's law is a make-believe, and his menaces mere words; but because of Christ's death it comes to pass that God's holiness is vindicated in the most glorious manner, whilst his love expresses itself in the richest and most precious results. By Christ's death it comes to pass that God is now just while he justifies the guilty that believe on him, holy while he accepts to his bosom the unholy that repent; and that his law is fixed as the attributes of him that made it, whilst the violators of that law are forgiven their violation, and received into friendship and communion with himself. And thus the sacrifice and death of Christ is the only channel through which the forgiving mercies and the enriching love of our Father can reach us; and any one that applies to God for mercy and forgiveness in any other name applies through the wrong channel; or upon any other footing, makes application where the door is shut, and no knocking can secure

its being opened ; but whenever, in the deep sense of his ruin, feeling that all on his part is lost and forfeited for ever, he draws near to God, and prays that he may be spared from everlasting death, and admitted into the realms of everlasting glory, only and wholly through the shed blood and precious sacrifice of the Lamb of God, heaven and earth may pass away, God may deny himself, but he cannot deny salvation to such an applicant.

But it is here said, Christ was sacrificed "for us." For whom? Not one need be excluded. There was not a single family in Israel, constituting the visible church, that might not slay its lamb and sprinkle its blood upon the threshold ; and there is not one soul in the universe to whom Christ our passover is refused, or who may not this very day receive all the blessings of the purchase of that precious blood. If any of my readers perish, it is not want of efficacy in the blood of Jesus, but want of confidence in it on our part ; it is not any want of sufficiency in his sacrifice, but it is want of faith in the reception of it into our hearts. It is want of trust, not want of efficacy, in the blood of Jesus. It is our suspicion, not his unwillingness, that is our ruin : Christ has been sacrificed, in his blood there is efficacy to cleanse from all the sins of a thousand worlds, and to reconcile to himself all the souls of ten thousand times the number of the inhabitants of this. The only reason that one soul perishes is because that soul will not believe the word of God, and personally acquiesce in the provisions of his

glorious and blessed Gospel. But those whose trust is in that precious blood are safe as if they were embosomed amid the attributes of Deity: those who feel the effect of his blood sprinkled on their hearts can never be moved. The 91st Psalm and all the promises of God may be written on the lintels on which the blood is sprinkled. You may hear the rush of the angel's wing as he sweeps by to the havoc, but that noise shall be music to you. You may hear the thunders and see the lightnings of Sinai, but they cannot touch you; neither life, nor death, nor height, nor depth, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, dare touch the soul that is cleansed in this blood, or injure the prospects of him that puts his trust in Christ our passover sacrificed for us.

I have thus described the sacrifice offered, and the safety it secures. Let us never forget what I have stated, that the only, the exclusive element of our safety and deliverance is nothing in us, nothing by us, but Christ's sacrifice for us. And, secondly, that as that blood, the blood of the lamb, was not washed off the lintels of his house by the fears, the trembling, the doubts of the Israelite within, so the efficacy of the blood of Christ our Passover, and our safety by its virtue, is not shaken by the fears, the doubts, the anxieties that may spring up in our heart. Do not think when a cloud overcasts it that the glorious luminary of noon is extinguished; it is only a little fog, and

the fervour of his beams will soon melt and dissipate it. Do not think that the world is convulsed when one of its inhabitants trembles. Do not believe that God's promise fails because our weak, wavering hearts sometimes doubt and distrust them. I believe the great cause of all our fears, anxieties, and despair, and doubts and perplexities, is that we think God like ourselves. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways ours. His love is large as immensity, enduring as eternity, unchangeable as his throne. If my salvation were to depend upon my frames and feelings and strength of faith and warmth of love, for a single hour, I should be lost for ever. But when my heart faints and my flesh fails, and doubts cloud my mind, and difficulties cramp my heart, I instantly recollect the glorious foundation, and say, "Well, let it be so;" it is the shivering and trembling of the poor tenant; the blood is on the lintel, the angel of death will see it, and unworthy as I am he dare not touch me. "Christ our pass-over is sacrificed for us."

I have spoken of the sacrifice; let me now speak of what was strictly and properly the feast that followed upon the sacrifice. We read in the interesting and beautiful account of the first passover recorded in Exodus, that after the lamb had been slain, and its blood was sprinkled on the lintel,—which was the sacrifice—the flesh of this lamb was roasted in the house, and partaken of by all the inhabitants of that house, as the feast which fol-

lowed the sacrifice. I wish this to be specially attended to. There is an important distinction. In the passover as it is commemorated in the book of Exodus, and in every subsequent passover in the land of Israel, there were two parts. One part was in the first instance the sacrifice of the lamb, the sprinkling of its blood upon the lintel, or pouring it out as an offering; and the second part was the roasting of its flesh—the family, with bitter herbs and with unleavened bread, participating of that roasted flesh. The first, or the sacrifice of the lamb, was their deliverance; the second, or the feast upon the sacrifice of the lamb, was the personal acceptance and grateful recognition of that deliverance. The first was the safety, the second was the nutriment received by the Israelite, arising wholly and solely from that safety. Now the Jews had to do both: first, to make the sacrifice or shed the blood of the inoffensive lamb, by which they were delivered from death; and secondly, they had to prepare the feast, and feed upon the flesh of the lamb that had been slain. In other words, the ancient Israelite had all the *pain* that must have been occasioned by the first, or the slaughter of the lamb, and also they had all the *pleasure* that must have followed on the second, or the feeding upon the flesh that had been roasted. Now in our case we have but one part. Christ took to himself all the painful part when he shed his blood, and endured the curse, and bare our sins. Thus the sacrificial part is finished, and there can be nothing

added to its efficacy or subtracted from its virtue. But the second part, or the festival after the sacrifice, he bequeathed to us. Christ took to himself the *painful*, and has left for us, as his legacy, the *pleasant* only. Hence when we draw near to the Lord's supper, we come there not to a sacrifice—that was finished on the cross,—but to the *festival* which follows after the sacrifice, and which is to be continued till he comes again. Christ fought the battle, we wear the laurels; Christ emptied the cup of all its bitterness, we drink the sweets with which he filled it; Christ had the agony of treading the wine-press alone, we have the pleasure of drinking that new wine in the kingdom of our Father. His was all the pain, ours is all the pleasure. He wept as the Man of Sorrows, and suffered as the victim; we are invited, as redeemed and delivered, to come to a communion table, and celebrate a festival of joy, commemorative of the most glorious transaction that ever occurred in the history of the universe of God.

Now if these things be so, we see what are the right views which we ought to entertain when we approach the communion table. There is a feeling or presentiment of terror in the minds of many about the Lord's supper, which is most unchristian and most unscriptural. There are, in the minds of not a few, associations and impressions on the nature of the Lord's supper, of the most terrific description. They put on their gloomiest apparel on its occurrence, and come with sorrowful and

heavy hearts. They come to it as to a funeral or a sacrifice, to something awful, terrible, and repulsive. Their idea seems to be that God waits there to see if he can find any one drooping, or faltering, in order instantly to let fall upon him consuming and desolating judgment. If that were the Lord's supper, I should have no comfort or encouragement in inviting any one to come to it. But it is not so. All the curse has been exhausted, and blessings only have been left. All the agony has been borne, and only the joy remains. Christ bore all the pain when, as a priest, a sacrifice, a victim, he died upon the cross; and he has bequeathed us the precious, the inestimable privilege of gathering round the table, on which there is no wrath, and over which there is only the covenant rainbow that surrounds the throne of our reconciled Father and our loving God, and taking into our hands these memorials as our evidence and protestation to the universe, that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

We read that when the Israelites celebrated the first passover, they ate it with their loins girt, as men prepared for action; each with his staff in his hand, ready to begin his pilgrimage through the desert to the land of promise. Even so are we to draw near to the Lord's table; this act is a profession of our readiness to begin our exodus from Egypt. It is a declaration that we are prepared not to be conformed to this world, as far as this world is in antagonism to the mind and spirit of God. We publicly declare that what is sinful we

hereby solemnly renounce, as the Israelites renounced Egypt of old, and that what is promised we hereby hope for according to the promises of God. We come to that table as pilgrims and strangers, as our fathers were, declaring our belief that this world, even in its sunniest spots, is not our home, and that we look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Was it any sorrow to the Israelite to forsake Egypt and turn his face to the land of promise? Do I address any one who has ever found perfect peace and satisfaction in this world? Is there any true Christian who does not feel that one will never know what perfect peace is, till he has reached that land of perfect holiness where alone perfect happiness is? Is there any true Christian who would abide in this world as it is for ever and ever? The wonder should be that believers do not long for that summons which lifts them from the world that now is, and wafts them, as on angels' wings, to that world that will be. It is because we have got an impression, as believers even, that death is the extinction of the loved, the dear, and the near. It is no such thing. Death is but the soul casting off the shroud that represses it, that it may unfurl its wings, and rise to realms of endless sunshine and perpetual peace. I have no doubt that the spirits of the pious dead, if permitted to see the home in which their remains lie preparatory to burial, would say to their sorrowing relatives, if they could be allowed to speak, "Weep not for us,

weep for yourselves; we find it true, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; our labours are finished, our pilgrimage is done; come up hither, and follow us, and them that through faith inherit the promises."

It is stated also that the Israelites were to celebrate this passover without leaven. The Apostle explains what this means, "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." And the Apostle Peter explains the meaning of it further—"Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." This is the suitable preparation for the Lord's supper; the best preparation for the Lord's supper is not a face screwed into unison with the aspect of a particular denomination, nor the utterance of some favourite shibboleth, nor the assumption of a form on that day, more sedate or melancholy than on others, but the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth. It is laying aside all malice, guile, evil speaking, hypocrisy, envy, and all uncharitableness. And let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, be put away from you, and be ye tender-hearted, forgiving one

another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

This supper was to be celebrated in every house, and by every family. In other words, it was a social and domestic, but sacred meal. The Lord's supper is really so; it is not a priest administering the sacrament to the Church, but it is the whole congregation seating themselves as priests unto God around their Father's table, and eating the bread he has given them, and drinking of the wine that he has mingled. It is not the minister administering the sacrament to any, as a priest to the laity; it is the congregation of kings and priests unto God that surround their Father's table, and take what Christ has given them, without any intermediate party, as the commemoration of his death, and sacrifice, and suffering for us. Are you sincere in your attachment to Jesus? Are you trusting in him as your only passover sacrifice? Are you washed in his precious blood? Are you free from prejudice and passion, and ill-will and evil-speaking, and malice, and uncharitableness? Are you tender-hearted, forgiving one another? Are you among the pure in heart, the meek, them that hunger and thirst after righteousness? Come then, not, however, leaning upon this, as if this were your title, but leaning upon this fact alone, that that table and your consciences are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and that God is your Father, you his children, and so no destroying angel may dare to scathe you.

Do you feel that you belong to the family of God? I do not ask for the depth of your faith, I ask only after its sincerity. I do not ask after the extent and attainments of your Christianity, but I ask, is it real? Can you now say, that if the angel of death were to sweep through this land, you have but one single fact on which you dare trust, and that fact is, that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us?" and are you so satisfied that this fact is real, that you can peril your everlasting prospect for death, and judgment, and eternity upon it? Let us have our minds clear upon this. It is the greatest glory to God, and it will be the greatest peace to your own conscience, it will be the element of the intensest joy, when we can simply realize this great fact, "Blessed be God, my acceptance at his throne is not contingent on the strength of my faith, or upon the intensity of my joy, or upon the purity of my feelings — precious as these are in their place; but it is contingent upon this — nay, it is not contingency, but it is fixed, and sure, and founded upon this, that Christ my Passover has been sacrificed for me."

Come thus to the table of the Lord; come to that table, not to observe an interesting rite which has been handed down in ecclesiastical history; not as to a decent, beautiful, and Scriptural formality; but come to it as the sequel of Calvary. Suppose that the Son of God still hung upon the cross; suppose that those precious accents still rung in

your ears, "It is finished;" suppose that the eclipse that covered all the land had just passed away; and suppose that you knew that that blood which had been there shed could cleanse a universe from more than a universe's sins; and then suppose that you were called upon to surround this table as the sequel to that fact, the joy after Christ has drunk the bitterness; to taste the wine after he has trod the wine-press, — to wear the laurels after he has fought the battle, and gained the victory; with what delight, with what gratitude, with what joy would you approach it, feeling it to be the expression of personal faith, by which and at which you say, "I take this bread and drink this wine just to let the world know, in obedience to the mind of God, that my whole trust is upon the passover sacrificed for me, and my deliverance and hope of happiness and acceptance before God, upon the blood that has been sprinkled upon me; and I now take this bread and this wine to show that I, personally, individually, in my heart and conscience, appropriate, and personally rest upon, that sacrifice, and seek heaven and happiness wholly and solely through its efficacy." So we come to the Lord's table, to a most solemn, indeed, but to a most beautiful and glorious act, the remainder, as it were, of Calvary, the sequel to the sacrifice, the participation together of the joys that have been purchased and procured at so great a price. The wonder to me is, not that so many recoil from

that table, but that thousands do not rush to it; not as if it had any virtue, as if it were a sacrifice, God forbid! but in order there and then to proclaim truly, sincerely, from the depths of their heart, that their trust and confidence, and peace, all rest upon this fact, that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

## VIII.

DAILY BREAD, OR THOUGHTS FOR A COMMUNION  
SABBATH.

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
Hold me by thy powerful hand:  
Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”—MATT. vi. 11.

THE Lord's Prayer is divided into two great sections: the first section contains the *riches of God*—“thy name,”—“thy kingdom,”—“thy will.” In the second section we have the *poverty of man*—“us forgive,”—“us lead not,”—“us deliver;” the two constituting the great points that, brought together, give glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will among mankind. In the former of these two divisions we ask, first of all, for spiritual blessings. And in so doing we have an illustration of the harmony that pervades every portion of the word of God. The Lord's Prayer is, for instance, the precept, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” *i. e.* things spiritual, “and all these things,” *i. e.* things temporal, “shall be added unto you,” turned into prayer.

First, we must ask the spiritual, and next the

temporal; not the exclusion of the one in order that there may be the absolute supremacy of the other, but the preference and priority of the one, and the subordination of the other. The believer seeks first the interests of the soul; secondly, and next to these, the well-being of the body. In other words, we are taught that God leads and teaches us to care, not for the soul only but for the body also. Neither can exist alone: he suffers neither to be forsaken or forgotten. He cares for the mightiest; he provides for the everlasting safety of the soul, and for the temporal well-being of the body that perisheth. In this we have a beautiful precedent and model for our feelings, our prayers, our practice. There is a tendency among men, even among good men, to go to extremes. One man is absorbed wholly by this question, "What shall I eat or what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" this is the man that prays, if he prays at all, only the last half of the Lord's Prayer. Another man is wholly absorbed about the salvation of the soul. He thinks, however, in grievous ignorance, that in order to achieve this it needs the maceration of the body, and the exhaustion of its strength, not the crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh, but the crucifixion of the flesh itself; he retires into a monastery and starves and tortures the body in order, as he supposes, to save and sanctify the soul. These are extremes. This prayer and all God's word, which is a commentary upon this prayer, teach us to care for the

soul first, but not only. That should have the supreme regard, but not the exclusive regard. We should seek the kingdom of God first, and all other things in due subordination to it; and it will appear that this, the way of God, is always the best, even for the present prosperity of man; for he whose care has been first about the soul, is he who can proceed to provide for the body with the greatest energy and the greatest satisfaction to himself.

In looking at this clause, "Give us this day our daily bread," I wish the reader especially to notice what I am anxious to impress upon him above all, and what is the great lesson conveyed in this petition, that God is here set before us simply as THE GIVER. This is not a thought that has occurred to me for the first time, but a thought that seems to me not adequately felt, nor frequently enough impressed. We are all prone in our conceptions of God to think of him, generally as *the exactor*, and rarely as *the giver*. Is it not true that our very first ideas of God are those of a Being who is constantly *exacting duties*, not of a Being who is constantly *giving blessings*? I wish specially to impress this: it is a leading thought, and, rightly seen in all its breadth and comfort. We are disposed constantly to think of God as a Being exacting severe and incessant duty, and very rarely, or at least very inadequately as a beneficent Being, giving incessantly great, precious, and lasting benefits. In other words, we hear constantly sounding from the

skies demands for duty, obedience, allegiance: we rarely see and feel, as we ought to see and feel, the descent continually of mercy, benefits and blessings. Hence we merge God the giver in God the exactor. We merge "our Father" in the Great Legislator; we look at him not in the light that streams from the countenance of Jesus, but in the light of "the consuming fire:" and looking at God in this light, and regarding him in this relationship, we come crowding and shivering like slaves around a communion table, deprecating the lightning that we think ready to consume us, instead of coming like sons, joyful sons—in the shelter of Calvary, and in the light of Mount Zion, with hearts that overflow with responsive love, and lives that reflect the fruits of it upon the religion we profess. In other words, our idea of God as exclusively the exactor, makes us feel self-righteousness, disappointment, terror, despair, alarm. The idea of God the giver, even when it is exclusively the predominant idea, begets in us gratitude, and love, and joy, and thanksgiving. In praying, in hearing, in communicating, forget God the exactor, and think only of God the giver. Do not hear him saying, "Do this," but see him giving grace and glory, and withholding no good thing. God's way in the law, under which we are not, is, "Do this and thou shalt live;" God's way in the Gospel, under which we are, is to give, and to make the gifts that he gives like seeds sown in the heart that grow up into a harvest of joy, holiness, happiness,

and gratitude. Such is the contrast between God in the law and God in the Gospel. It is a striking truth—a truth we should never forget, that just what a man feels his God to be to him, that the man is to others. If we look upon God constantly as exacting duty but not as giving blessings, we become the greatest exactors of duties from others; but if we look at God and rejoice in God, as constantly giving blessings, we become the most bountiful and beneficent donors to others. The God with whom man's spirit comes into contact is the God whose character is impressed upon that spirit, and to whom the life of the individual is constantly conformed. Hence the greatest tyrant is always the most self-righteous man. The most beneficent philanthropist is always the most spiritually-minded and Christian man. But some one will say, if we only think of God giving blessings and never think of God as demanding duties, the consequence will be that we shall not be anxious about duty. In the first place, if the thought I have presented be true, we have no business with consequences. We are not to look at what may be the issue of things; but if the thing be right: we are not to care what may be the corollary that man's reasoning may draw from a truth, if that thing be revealed clearly, plainly, and unequivocally in God's word. But it appears that the lesson is in the opposite direction. We find in a beautiful parable, that the parties who had received the greatest blessings. and saw in God the

greatest giver, were just those who turned to account the gift most richly; and the party who saw in God the niggardly giver, and the stern exactor, was the very person that brought forth nothing at all. Let me turn your attention, in proof of this, to Matt. xxv. 14, for it is very illustrative of this thought. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents,"—here is the giver—"to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." Let us proceed to see the principle that actuated the man that hid his money in the earth. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." He has been acting as the giver throughout this dispensation, and presents himself as the exactor only when this dispensation closes. "And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." These two received simply gifts; there was no exaction, no condition, no obligation accompanying the gift. They were left as seeds deposited in their hearts to bring forth their own legitimate and proper fruits. Now let us hear the third; what did he say? "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." I looked upon thee as an exactor, I never dreamed of thee as a giver; and I thought thou hadst put this talent into my hands to test me, to try me, demanding from me more than I ever could, or ever dreamed of producing; and knowing thou wast an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." Do you not see that the two men who viewed God in the light of a giver were the very men that brought forth all the fruit, and that the man who viewed God simply as an exactor, and not as a giver, was the very man who did nothing at all? Then we have the argument from fact, the strongest of all, that he that

receives from God ceaseless benefits and blessings, is he that will make spontaneously the noblest and the richest practical response; and that he that looks up to God and sees him incessantly as the hard master, the imperious exactor, yields the least return of loyalty, allegiance, and love. Therefore let us shut our eyes to God the exactor, and open our hearts to a deeper sense of God the giver of all good things.

Thus, then, we are taught to draw near to him, giving trustful utterance to the cry, "Give us this day our daily bread." Some persons, however, are so charmed with the gift, that it forms a blind to their eyes, and prevents them from seeing the giver. This is simply idolatry; for what is idolatry? The worshipping some good thing that God has given us, instead of God himself, the giver of it. The moment that a gift in God's providence, be it money, be it power, be it renown, whatever it be, concentrates on itself our sympathy, our trust, or our worship, very soon, if we be God's own, he will interpose and blast it, or make it bitterly disappoint us, in order that in the chasm it has left we may see him who gave it and who hath taken it away.

But we are taught here in addressing that great Giver, to ask first of all "bread." "Give us this day our daily bread." This includes all that is needful for men to perpetuate their life here; and thus it teaches us that we have to ask from this great Giver, not simply spiritual, but also temporal

things. But do not many Christians ask of God a new heart, faith, joy, holiness, and most properly? but do they ask him, in the same way, health and strength, and peace, and external, social, domestic happiness? We have forfeited by sin, just as truly, the crumb of bread on which we feed this day, as we have forfeited the throne on which God placed us amid the sunshine of Paradise. We need just as truly and as really to ask of God food, as we need to ask faith. We need to ask of him as truly our daily bread, as our supply of daily grace. But what is implied in our asking daily bread? Does it mean that God would be pleased to shower down bread from the skies, as he showered manna on the Israelites in the wilderness? or to give us bread without the toil and anxiety of labouring for it? Bread without labour is not necessarily a blessing; it is the man who has made his money who feels and knows how to spend it. To him to whom it came independent of his efforts it is often the least of a blessing. We do not here pray that God would give us bread to enable us to live in indolence.—This would be to contradict his own holy word, that, if any man will not work, neither should he eat. And we recollect, too, “in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread:” and in offering up this petition to God we pray to him that he would give us wisdom to direct us in our employments: that he would give us strength to toil, health to eat that bread, and that he would provide for us such measure of it as may be most

expedient for us. The word of the devil is, "Command that these stones be made bread"—a *bonus* upon indolence—the word of the Lord of Glory is, "It is written, Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—an incentive to toil and trust. In these words our Lord also teaches, that to have bread is not necessarily to have nutriment. Chemists may speculate as they please, and test as they please; but there is no more reason why flesh should nourish us any more than sand, or why bread should nourish us and stones should not. The simple reason is, that the one is the ordinance of God, and that the other is not. And we know very well that the bread will not always give nutriment,—it needs the healthful heart as well as the stored basket; and when we pray, therefore, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray to God not only that we may have bread to eat, but that we may have also that healthful appetite which will enable us to extract from that bread the nutriment that is convenient for us. It is the blessing of God that can change the crumb into a glorious banquet. It is the absence of that blessing that leaves the richest banquet to turn into absolute poison. The blessing is the seasoning of the bread, without which it will be insipid to the taste and unhealthful to him that eats it. And thus God has ordained, that if the poor man must pray, "Give us daily bread," *i. e.* give me strength to earn it, that I may have it, he has also, in that equitable division of

substantial, natural happiness, which is far more the great characteristic of our world than we think, made it as necessary that the rich man should pray, "Give us this day our daily bread;" for while the poor man has little bread and a healthy appetite, how often is it true that the rich man has plenty of bread but an unhealthy appetite to partake of it! Thus the rich and the poor must meet together, whether they will or not, at the common throne of the common Father, and must equally pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But the petition is limited in another respect. It is not said, "Give us bread," but give us bread for this day. We do not ask bread for to-morrow: what a reproof is this to many of us! We do not ask bread for next week or next year; at least, we ought not. But those anxious thoughts that cark and corrode the spirits of us all—those glances that we cast into the forbidden ground, the future—those anxious thoughts about things that may be, or that may never be—are all, translated into intelligible language, "O Lord, the prayer that Jesus taught us is not good enough for us, we need to amend it; give us this day to-morrow's bread, and in this year give us bread for next year." But will not such a principle as this do away with everything like proper provision for the future, and turn man into the fisher by the stream, the hunter amid the woods, the savage without foresight, care, or prudence of any kind? I will answer this question by asking another. Does your anxious care

about the future in the least degree alter the future? Does your anxiety about to-morrow make you stronger, when to-morrow comes, for to-morrow's duty? Does the anxiety of the husbandman about what shall be next autumn, make him plough with greater energy, sow with greater speed, and cultivate the soil with greater effect? Does the merchant who trembles before his ship sets sail, and is afraid that she will founder amid the waves, or be dashed to pieces on rocks, make arrangements more effectually, or embark on his enterprise with greater satisfaction? You know it is all the reverse; he ploughs and sows with the greatest peace whose heart is lifted unto Him that holds the winds and the rains in the hollow of his hand; and he that embarks his goods upon the bosom of the restless deep, with the recollection that God rules the waves, restrains the tempest, and says to it, as it sweeps on strongest pinions, "Hitherto, but no further," does so with greatest prudence. It is this sinful anxiety about the future—it is this dissatisfaction with this prayer—it is this desire to amend and improve this petition, that leads men to embark in wild and extravagant schemes; the tradesman to leave his trade, the farmer his farm, the shopman his shop, and rush all to California, where they may obtain a fortune for to-morrow, instead of being content to ask and labour for bread for to-day. It is this wild, and extravagant, and ungodly feeling, that leads so many to mix the days of the next year with those of the present

year; and when they have done so, to find spring from the chaos a viper that fastens not upon the hand, from which it may be shaken away, but upon the heart, where it feeds upon our life-blood, and gnaws our happiness at its core. Strange, mysterious, inexplicable phenomenon is man! he puts off the duties of to-day for to-morrow, and draws upon to-morrow for fears and anxiety to dwell with him to-day. Would that the Spirit of God would only teach us more emphatically to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." "Commit thyself unto him that careth for you." We have no lease of life: very many persons think of their lives as they look to their houses; they think they have a lease, and that one party cannot break the lease without the consent of the other. That is perfectly true of houses, but it is not true of human life. The great Proprietor has given us life, but he has not left it with us to determine when the lease shall expire. We may receive as we ask for to-day; we have nothing to do with to-morrow, but to face its duties, and triumph in its trials when they overtake us, feeling that that God who has fed us to-day will feed us to-morrow, when to-morrow comes. "Give us this day our daily bread." But there is an epithet applied to bread here. It is said, "*daily* bread." The word translated "daily" occurs but once in the whole New Testament: I have looked into various Lexicons, and I cannot find that it is used by any classic Greek author. It is the word ἐπιούσιον. The deriva-

tion of it is from ἐπὶ, preposition, "upon," and οὐσία, substance, or being. Jerome, the Latin Father, in translating the Greek New Testament into Latin, renders this clause, "Da nobis hodie supersubstantialem panem," "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread:" and Abelard, of whom you may have read, taught those associated with him to pray in Jerome's language, and to say, "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread." The words are extremely emphatic, "Give us this day τὸν ἄρτον τὸν ἐπιούσιον," "Give us *the* bread, that supersubstantial bread." The most correct periphrasis would be, "Give us this day that which is bread indeed, which is substantially so, really so, worthy of the name, and properly called so; and give us that bread which no one but thyself can give this day." May there not be here some allusion above the bread that perishes? may it not refer to that spiritual and better bread that cometh down from heaven? I believe that temporal bread is the main idea, but I do conceive, from this peculiar epithet applied to it, that the better bread is also referred to. I am led to think so especially, when I connect it with such expressions of our Lord as, "Man doth not live by bread alone." And again, in the Gospel of John, "I will give you that bread from heaven." And again, "The Jews murmured at him because he said, I am the bread that cometh down from heaven." We know he was here evidently alluding to himself as that bread. Again he says, "Your fathers did eat manna in the

wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if a man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." May it not be that this clause means, "Give us indeed the bread that perishes, but give us also that bread, the supersubstantial bread that cometh down from heaven—that bread, of which if a man eat, he shall live for ever—that bread which is the Son of God—that bread which is the symbol of his incarnation, his sacrifice, his death and suffering for us?" At all events, if this should not be correct, I may mention that one of the most eminent German divines, Tholuck, conceives that it is a spiritual meaning that is to be applied to this clause; and that it denotes, as Jerome conceived, spiritual and not temporal bread. We cannot here be wrong in taking an intermediate interpretation; that is, in asking bread that perishes, in order that we may have this better bread that cometh down from heaven. In other words, we may understand that we are taught to seek temporal blessings in order to obtain spiritual and everlasting blessings. You remember Rachel asked for a son, to gratify her pride; that son was given, and she perished at his birth, calling him with her expiring accents, Benoni, the son of my sorrow. But we read that Hannah made the same request; she too asked for a son, and God

granted her petition, because that son was to be devoted to the service of the Lord. When we ask, therefore, temporal blessings in order that spiritual ones may be attained through or by them, we may expect that God will bestow them; but when we ask temporal blessings for display, for vanity, for self-glory, for gratifying the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, then it is mercy in God to withhold them, or so to give them that they are not adequately enjoyed.

We not only ask God as the giver for *bread*, *daily bread*, but we also say, "Give *us* this day our daily bread." How beautiful is this! A Christian cannot ask a blessing for himself without asking it for all mankind. The prodigal's petition—the petition of a selfish heart was, "Give *me* the portion of goods that falleth to me." The petition of the child of God is, "Give *us* this day our daily bread." I have always thought that a very beautiful clause in the English Litany in which we pray, after asking many blessings for many classes, "that it may please thee to have mercy upon all men." Large-hearted and comprehensive sympathy with the necessities and wants and sorrows of all mankind is a right Christian spirit. God, however, in teaching us this petition, has taught us that we cannot petition for ourselves without petitioning for others. In short, liberality and sympathy and unselfishness are impressed, by the very constitution of the universe, more or less upon us. The farmer cannot go forth in the spring to sow his

seed without feeding all the worms in the earth and all the fowls in the air. It is matter of fact, that three-fifths of the seed sown are consumed by the birds and worms. And if in order to prevent this he should sow less, he would have no crop; or if he should have recourse to a recent chemical contrivance, by dipping the seed in arsenic in order that the worms may not feed on it, the very birds that he shoots for his sport and sells for his profit eat the tainted corn, and disease, like a retribution from the skies, has been spread among thousands unexpectedly in consequence. Let man try to be the monopolist in the earth, and he will soon be swept from its surface. Let man try to feed all and to provide for all to the utmost of his power, and he will find that God will take care of him and provide for him. "Give us this day our daily bread." What intensity of meaning must this prayer have had in the infant Church at Jerusalem! where we read they that had goods "sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need," neither said any man that aught he had was his own. I do not say that community of goods is now a duty; I believe it would be ruin; but I believe that the great law that was illustrated in the Church at Jerusalem is a law applicable for all times, and circumstances, and countries, and seasons. Communism is an abomination; but property has its duties, and its responsibilities: in

short, devolving upon it large-heartedness, liberality, benevolence, sympathy; and the moment that it neglects these duties the possessor will find it is no blessing. One cannot but feel that when we have been praying in the sanctuary, "Give us this day our daily bread"—praying that all mankind may share it, and when one passes by the numerous wretched objects in the street, one is perplexed whether to give, and thus possibly contribute to the perpetuation of deception, imposture, and trading in sin, or whether in every case to withhold, and leave many a meritorious one to pine, and hungry ones and cold ones to go home and weep, and suffer and die in secret. Perhaps the great want is that as a nation we should say, "Give us this day our daily bread;" and as a nation make yet richer and larger provision for the poor. I believe it is God's ordinance that the poor should be taken care of, and no nation will be ever blest that enriches itself at the expense of neglecting and starving its dependent poor. May this prayer that rises in our churches and in our homes, rise in the mighty masses of this mighty nation, "O Lord, give us this day our daily bread!"

I would ask the reader, in drawing one or two practical remarks from the whole, to recollect now the beautiful and sanctified light in which I have asked him to regard our God, not as the exactor of sacrifices and of duties, however true that may be in its place and degree, but to think of him on

a Communion Sabbath as the giver of our daily bread, and of the bread of life; as the giver of grace and the giver of glory. Think of God only as enriching you with his blessings, and loving you without one word to limit those blessings in the shape of condition, and then turn the thought to benevolent and practical and blessed account. The law is a continual voice, "Thou shalt do this, and thou shalt not do that;" the Gospel is the silent hand coming forth from the cloud and pouring into your cup the blessings that you receive, and suggesting, "Lovest thou me?" and leaving the response of gratitude to go forth and exhibit the holy, the consistent, the obedient life. Obedience to God is less an exaction made by God, and more a spontaneous offering that is given in return by man.

In the second place, be sure when you ask for bread and blessings from him who is the Giver, to ask not for yourself only, but for all: and as you ask for all, and receive for yourself, remember, that what God gives you, a blessing, he gives to you as a steward. In this is a great truth; let us not forget it. Whatever God gives us he gives us as stewards. If a man receive 20,000*l.* he has it merely for his lifetime, he cannot take it to the grave with him; and if he could, it would be worth nothing to him; or if he receives so much *per annum* he receives it only for life, and no more. God gives us these things in order that we may give to others. Why does he make one soil more

fertile than another? That it may bear richer fruit, and thus compensate for the deficiency of the the barren. Why does he make one richer than another? That he may be more liberal, till at last it is seen that he that is lord of all is the steward of all, and he that receives most is bound by the most solemn obligations to give most to those that are around him. I believe that the Christian Church has never yet risen to the dignity and duty of beneficence for Christ's sake. We have always given superfluities. I believe that the old law of tithe which was given to the Jews, that every one ought to give a tenth of what he had to God's cause, is not, in the letter, obligatory upon us, but in the spirit of it it is substantially so.

Let us not fail, above all, to ask for spiritual bread, the better bread that cometh down from heaven. The bread on the communion table is but the commemoration of that sacrifice made, the oblation completed; and when we meet at the communion table, we take into our hands this element of bread to be our silent prayer that God would feed us with living bread—to be our solemn declaration of our belief that God has provided for us that bread, and as soon, and sooner far may a father refuse bread to his offspring round him, than the Great Father of us all refuse living bread to those souls that ask it in sincerity and truth. And with reference to temporal things, let our desires be moderate, and our enjoyment will only be the greater. Learn, communicant, to pray with

Agar, "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches." Can you at the communion table, in your own home, in the depth and secrecy of your heart, utter this prayer, "Give me neither poverty"—that I know most can pray, but can you add, "nor riches;" "feed me with food convenient for me?" "Give me not riches, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Give me not poverty, lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." In other words, the Old Testament and the New Testament, like the twin lips of an ancient oracle, utter but one exhortation, and teach but one petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." When you have obtained the bread that perisheth and the bread of life, what next comes? We must not be always praying and never praising. They that eat their bread in humility are they that will praise with gratitude and joy. And hence God warned his people of old, "When thou hast eaten," *i. e.* after I have given daily bread, "and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God;" and if I address any who in their retrospect of past years feel that God has given them, by ways they least expected, and to an amount they least deserved, their daily bread,—any who believe that God has given them during last year the better bread that cometh down from heaven, and enabled them to taste that he is gracious,—any who have mercies to commemorate,—who have blessings, bright and open like the morning dew, in their retrospect,—

who have been taught to cherish hopes no less brilliant in perspective,—any who believe that to God they are indebted for all, and that on him they are determined still to hang for all,—then you are the parties who should approach the table of the Lord, there to praise and thank the giver. For you a new song is ready; for your new heart is prepared what is emphatically a eucharistic hymn: “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name; for he hath pardoned my sins, he hath healed my disease, he hath renewed my youth, he hath satisfied my mouth with good things, he hath crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Bless the Lord, O my soul.”

## IX.

CLEAVING TO THE SAVIOUR ; OR AFTER-COMMUNION  
VOWS.

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”—RUTH i. 16.

People of the living God,  
I have sought the world around;  
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,  
Peace and comfort nowhere found.  
Now to you my spirit turns—  
Turns a fugitive unblest'd;  
Brethren, where your altar burns,  
O receive me unto rest;  
Lonely I no longer roam,  
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;  
Where you dwell shall be my home—  
Where you die shall be my grave,  
Mine the God whom you adore,  
Your Redeemer shall be mine;  
Earth can fill my heart no more,  
Every idol I resign.

It appears from the book from which I have selected these words, that Naomi was a Christian, that the two sons were married to two Gentile wives, who were not Christians, namely Orpha and Ruth; that the husbands of both died, and Naomi was about to return to the land of her

fathers, where she could enjoy the worship of her own and her father's God—the living and the true God. The two daughters-in-law were distressed at the prospect of separation. One of them, and in the first instance, both, proposed following her. She stated, however, reasons and facts, that prevented one of them at least from persevering in her determination, for it is stated “Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but,” it is added in emphatic contrast to this, that Ruth not only “kissed her,” but “clave unto her.” When Naomi saw that Ruth clave unto her, she said to her, “Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.” “Let not affection bias you; the change you will make must be a change from the worship of the gods of the Gentiles to the worship of the living and true God who made heaven and earth. Let not your affection to a mother lead you to change without conviction the creed that you deliberately adopt; do not therefore persist in following me against the suggestions of conscience, and in compliance only with the prescriptions of ardent affection, but rather follow what your conscience applauds as true, than let your affections to me determine the religion you will embrace.” She also showed her that she could have no prospect of earthly aggrandisement in following her. She tells her in the first instance that she was poor, saying in verse 21, “I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty;” and she

states in verse 13, "The hand of the Lord is gone out against me;" I am therefore poor and friendless; I cannot enrich you; if you should follow me you will neither be made great nor wealthy, and therefore if any human motives or the prospect of earthly aggrandisement actuate you, you will be bitterly disappointed. For "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty;" I went out Naomi, "the beautiful," pronounced to be so in the estimate of all, I return Mara, "bitter," in affliction and sorrow, and a spectacle to all, so that "the city was moved when they saw me, and said, Is this Naomi?" She thus puts before her daughter-in-law religion in rags, and says, Can you thus follow me? A very important question: religion is not always clothed in purple and in fine linen; it is not always found in palaces and noble halls; nor basking in the sunshine, and followed by the smiles, and surrounded by the splendour of this world; it sometimes precedes to the prison and leads to the stake, demands sacrifice, suffering, surrender; and then a man's religion is tested, when he that followed Christianity in the sunshine is called upon to follow her in the cloud, in pain and in suffering. But though she gave evidence enough of her poverty, the very remarks that she made while conveying a statement of her poverty indicated also her piety. She did not even in that remote and patriarchal age when life and immorality were not so vividly brought to light, say, "Circumstances have made me poor, misfortunes have reduced me." C

looked above secondary causes. She saw God behind the cloud; in every stroke she heard his voice; she says, "*The hand of the Lord* is gone out against me, and the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me;" as Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And here it is important to notice her object in stating this. She says to Ruth, "You are about to follow me, to leave the gods of your country, and to worship the true God: recollect that this God whom you purpose to come with me and worship is a God that afflicts his people when it is good for them: for this same Lord whom you desire to follow has made me poor: he has shattered all my prospects, he has taken away what is nearest and dearest to me, and yet I cleave to him: though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; it was not the penal infliction of a judge, but the paternal chastisement of the Father." Having thus stated her poverty, and that the God she trusted in was the God that had afflicted her, she says to Ruth, "Now look at these things; count the cost; do not begin to build without counting what you will have to pay, and if you are dissatisfied, return. If you can make the sacrifice, then follow me and come." The beautiful reply of Ruth is a reply full of decision: "Intreat me not to leave thee"—that would break my heart; my mind is made up, for "whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people," though they should

be poor, "and thy God my God," though he should afflict me as he has afflicted thee, he shall still be my God. It is thus that Naomi may here be regarded as the representative of true religion, and Ruth a follower of that religion; and surely it is not doing violence to the text, but rather following out its spirit, if I take her not as the representative of religion in the abstract, but of him who is the Alpha and Omega of all real and living religion—the Lord Jesus Christ: and if after the reader has enjoyed a communion Sabbath, I presume that some such resolution as that which glowed in her heart glows in the hearts of those who have felt the love and tasted the excellence of the "chief among ten thousand," "altogether lovely."

Then looking at this as the believer's address to his blessed Lord, let us examine the language of it. "Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee."

The first feature in a believer's life, as indicated here, is that he follows Christ. We find in the Apocalypse the beautiful statement, "These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." The believer is not to follow the minister, however excellent his character or eloquent his words; nor the church, however beautiful its forms or particularly useful it has been during the history of its existence; nor is he to follow any creature upon earth, or any angel in the sky, as the model of excellence, or as the object of his love;—he is to follow none implicitly but him in whom he can

trust exclusively — the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he follows him, he is not to follow him with faltering or wavering footsteps, but in the language of Ruth he is to follow him “whithersoever he goeth;” he is to follow him fully; he is to follow his precepts, bow to his will, cleave to his service, derive nutriment from him as the parasite derives its nutriment from the tree round which it climbs; ever to turn to him as the heliotrope turns to the sun in his meridian from the east onward to the west; and to follow him steadfast and immovable as the needle that points perpetually to the pole; Christ the Alpha, Christ the Omega, of our life; Christ the rock on which we lean; Christ the model we implicitly and ceaselessly follow.

But not only does the believer follow Christ, but he follows him wherever he goes; “Where thou goest, I will go;” *i. e.* where Christ in his providence precedes, there the believer will follow: we must try not to go before Christ, but to go after him. “Where thou goest, I will go;” the place of which you are satisfied from the best and first impression, that Christ is not there, however profitable it may be, his people have no business in. The language of the Christian is, “Where thou goest, I will go.” This denotes agreement. “How,” it is said, “can two walk together except they be agreed?” it implies, therefore, that we are first at one with Christ, and then prepared to walk with him. The storm may be heavy, the way may belong, but if Christ precede you, the rough places

of the desert will be soft and beautiful as the paths of Eden, and the darkest night will have a thousand suns, instead of the day that has only one, if Christ precede us, and we follow.

After the example of Abraham, we shall go out not knowing whither we go, except that Abraham's Lord precedes us. After the example of Moses, we shall choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the the treasures of Egypt. We shall go with Christ, if needs be, to judgment, but not, like Peter, to deny that we know the man. We shall go with him like John, to the solitary isle of Patmos, and we shall see visions of apocalyptic glory; or like Bunyan, to the lonely prison, there to trace out the Pilgrim's Progress from a world of suffering and sin to a realm of felicity and joy. When the body cannot follow Christ, because of its feebleness, the heart within it will, as the captive bird in its cage strikes against the wires that enclose it, in order to reassert its freedom,—pant after him, whom to know and whom to follow is to know the truth, and to follow upward and onward to the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

“Where thou goest, I will go.” What a solemn assertion is that! wherever Christ goes, I will go: I *must* go—not, I shall be under the necessity of going—but, I will go. We should think nothing of suffering, we should regard little the peril, if we

are sure that we are in the path of duty. In reading of the exploits of our armies in India, we see that the soldier follows his leader to the cannon's mouth: he does not think of life or death, or of wounds or of peril; he has one idea in his mind, obedience to his commander. We, too, are soldiers, and soldiers under the great Captain of the faith, and we must be prepared, wherever his banner floats, there to be, and wherever he precedes, there, not reluctantly, but rejoicingly, to follow.

The believer also adds, "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge." Where has Christ lodged before? He himself has told us, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." He might now say, "I lodge rather in the garrets of the poor than in the palaces of the noble; you will find my footprints oftener in the lowly cottage than in the royal or imperial palace; oftener in the upper room, or in the lowly chapel, or in the humble meeting of the saints of God, than beneath the fretted roofs of magnificent cathedrals, or amid the pomp and splendour of a gorgeous ceremonial. Wherever two or three are met together in my name, there am I," *i. e.* "I lodge in the midst of them;" and if you ask me what spot in the universe is the favourite lodging of the Lord of glory, my answer will be, An humble, lowly, trusting heart, for with such he himself says, "I delight to dwell." In speaking of churches, it is said, the

chancel is holier than the rest of the church; but there is a chancel that is holier still, and that is the chancel of a holy heart: there is the true light, the fire that is never quenched, the glory that is never shaded, and there the Lord of glory tells you that he delights to dwell. And when his lodging will be no more below, but in the new Jerusalem, and amid the glory of that city that has no need of the sun nor of the moon, but which is illumined with the glory of God, then we, too, may lodge with him; having followed him below, having gone where he went, and lodged where he lodged, even there may we lodge also. Now joy lodges in us, then we shall lodge in joy. Now we have a stream from the ocean that enters into us, as an earnest and foretaste of what is to be; then we shall enter into that sea, unsounded and unfathomed, without shore and without limit and without bound—a sea of joy, the chimes of which man's ear hath not heard, and the ἀνάριθμον γέλασμα, the countless smiles of which his eye hath not seen, and the intense joy of which man's heart hath not conceived.

But it is added, as if to denote the complete surrender and sacrifice of the believer to his Lord, “Thy people shall be my people.” There is a test—thy people—whatever be their name, whatever be their circumstances, these are immaterial things,—“thy people shall be my people.” They may be a poor people. Christianity has been covered more frequently with rags than with royal robes.

It is not rags that make men to be ashamed, but sin, and sin alone, that is truly shameful; and we read in the word of God itself, that not many mighty, not many noble are called. It is said, too, that "the common people heard Christ gladly," when the proud Pharisee and the aristocratic Sadducee would not listen to him, except with contemptuous scorn. And if this is your resolution, you will prefer the company of a poor Christian to the company of a noble, but profane and ungodly man. Is it not too true, that place rags upon a Christian, and a coronet upon a wicked man's brow, half the world will run after the pomp, splendour, and glory, and turn with contempt from him who has God's grace within, but the emblems and symbols of poverty and destitution without? It implies, too, that God's people may be illiterate men. Many are masters of the learning of Cæsar, who are but babes indeed in the knowledge of Christ. It is possible to speak as many languages as Mithridates of old, to be skilled in all the branches of science, to know all that is in the largest Encyclopædia of this world, and yet not to know him, whom to know is eternal life. "The knowledge of this world is power," said a philosopher; we may add, "The knowledge of the world to come is life and peace;" the Spirit of God has pronounced it to be so. God's people, too, may not exactly agree with us in every jot and tittle of our ceremonial; they may not be able to pronounce our Shibboleth; they may not wear our

dress, or use precisely our prayers or our forms, and yet may be God's people. We need not only to feel this, but to act upon it. I believe that God has his people in all sects and parties of the Christian Church: most of them where bigotry thinks fewest of them are; even in the Church of Rome, as I have often told you, there are many of God's people, in spite of the system, not in consequence of it, and now listening to the cry that is lifted up from sea to sea, and from continent to continent, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues."

Thus God's people may be poor, they may be illiterate, they may be members of a Church differing from ours. Other things may have their influence, in fact they may very properly determine much of our course; but when we are looking for Christians, we must penetrate the outward covering, whether it be lawn sleeves or common rags, and see and recognise the seal and impress of the Lord on whomsoever it appears.

These people then, in the first place, are those who have felt this mighty truth in all its force, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" No man can be a Christian, who has not felt, in some degree, the force of this question. This people have also felt the practical, personal conviction that by nature they are fallen, ruined, lost, cast out from God, without merit, without title, without righteousness, and that whatever may be the little distinctions,

moral, political, social, circumstantial, by which men are separated upon earth, yet in the sight of God, and with reference to our right to heaven, we are all upon one dead level, without God, without Christ, and without any well-grounded hope in the world. Have you felt this, my reader? have you felt that your desert is by nature punishment from God; that if you have advanced one step towards glory, it has been entirely by the grace of God?

This people see in the Son of God all they need; in his blood, that which alone can cleanse them — in his righteousness, that which alone can cover them — in his intercession, that which alone can keep them from falling — in his promises, that which alone can encourage them. And they are the people who see in the Spirit of God that which alone can renew, regenerate, and sanctify them. They are satisfied that baptism cannot do it; they are perfectly convinced that no living man, by any power or process or incantation whatsoever can do it, and they feel that a new heart comes not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. They are a people who are in the world, but not of the world; they are here to discharge its duties, meet its responsibilities, and in their place enjoy the blessings that God affords them, but who feel at the same time, that they are here not to get ready to remain here, but to get ready to go hence; who feel that they are here to make preparation for a world beyond this, and in

whose mind this conviction is a power of plastic impresssion.

Such, then, are the people of God, of whom you say, in addressing the Saviour, "Thy people shall be my people." They may be few. Christ does not count *how many* are present in a congregation, but he ascertains *who* are present. They may not be wealthy, they may be in the depths of poverty; they may have no rank, they may be all plebeians; they may have no learning, they may just

"Know—and know no more—the Bible true;  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,"

but yet they may be the people of God.

The last resolution is, "Thy God shall be my God." It seems as if this were the original voice, and that Christ's words were the echo of it when he says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." What God then is this whom we thus resolve shall be our God? He whom we petition as "our Father." He whom I have endeavoured to describe to you as the giver of all good things—He who is defined by the Evangelist in one of his Epistles to be all "love"—He who is thus described by the prophet Micah: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and

thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." This God will be our God; he will give us his love to embrace us, his power to guide us, his fulness to enrich us, his glory to receive and welcome us. Then this God who is our God shall be so really. We rarely think of this fact, that nothing in this world is ours really? Money is not ours; it may be here to-day, it is gone to-morrow. Renown is not ours; it is like a snow-flake, perishable and short-lived. Health is not ours, "the wind passes over it, and it is gone." Talent is not ours; God's finger has but to touch the brain, and the greatest intellect is turned into idiocy. Life is not ours; for "we know not what a day may bring forth." Our souls are not our own; for God says, "All souls are mine." But there is one that is really ours, if we are really Christians, and He can never be taken away from us; "This God is our God, my Father and your Father, my God and your God." It is, therefore, with great emphasis and absolute truth, that we can say, as the Psalmist says in Psalm xviii., "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, my buckler, my salvation, my high tower." Monopoly here is duty; selfishness, if I may use such a word, here is not sin. To make sure of God as our God, each for himself, is not to deny God to others; for he that feels most truly, "this God to be his God," is just the person that will rejoice most heartily on hearing a thousand others round him say, "This God shall be our

God also." This God, then, shall be ours, and having him, we shall have all things. To have riches is but to have the seeds of sorrow; to have talent is to have a spark of momentary brilliancy; but to have God is to have all — to have him who is a substitute for all when all is gone, and to have what sanctifies and sweetens all when all continues. It is then, and then only, that we can sing what the prophet records: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

Let all such as intend to come to the communion table, and no less so all who have drawn near to it, thus address the Lord: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: whither thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

COMMUNICANTS THE LIGHTS OF THE WORLD; OR  
AFTER-COMMUNION DUTIES.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—  
MATT. v. 16.

It is assumed that the light of the Gospel has penetrated the Christian's mind, and therefore, he is desired to let it so shine before men that others may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in heaven. If the verse stopped at the middle clause, it would bid us be Pharisees; but as it stops where the Spirit of God has fixed the stop, it bids us be Christians. It is not, “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works” only—a Pharisee did that before and a Pharisee will do it still; but it is “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and *glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” This text inculcates the lesson, that what light we receive we ought to reflect in all its beauty, its glory, and its purity. It tells us we are not to be absorbents of the light only, but reflectors of it; that we are not to be merely receivers, but like God, givers. We are, in other words, to pray Psalm lxvii., but to take care not to end with the words, “God be merciful unto us and bless us,”—

there a selfish man might stop, but a Christian man cannot; he proceeds, "that thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations." A Christian prays that he may be blessed in order that he may be a blessing; that he may receive the greatest light in order that he may thereby communicate the greatest light. Monopoly, absorption, selfishness, are words not found in the Christian's language, and the exponents of feelings that must be strangers, more or less, to a Christian's heart. In order now to let your light thus shine in order to distribute what you thus receive, it is implied that you are to step forth from the solitary to the social life; that your sphere of duty is not to be a corner, but that it is to be the world. It implies that you are to be in the world, in its duties, in its responsibilities, in order to enlighten the world, and thus to glorify your Father which is in heaven. Light, the figure here used, is truly expressive: light has a soft, sweet, and continuous influence; it comes with a speed that arithmetic cannot calculate, yet it touches a sleeping infant's eye with a gentleness that makes no sensible impression. It is not said, "let your *lightning* so shine before men;" the course of many is like the lightning's flash, that illuminates for a moment, and then leaves a more terrible darkness behind: a Christian's career is like the light of the sun, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It implies that you are not to try to shine before you have light, but that you are first to see

that you are lights, and then, and then only, you will be luminous. All the epithets applied in the New Testament show us that a Christian's light is aggressive, or missionary, that is, it goes forth to do good to others. In this very chapter it is said, "ye are the lights of the world," "ye are the salt of the earth:" both beautiful characteristics of Christians. There are even among Christians, distinctions of progress in grace. Some have more pride, others more humility: the prouder or less subdued Christian, if such there be, would desire to be one of the lights of the world, something that will dazzle spectators by its splendour; but the humble Christian will be satisfied to be the salt of the earth which acts silently, but intensely, and penetrates unseen the surrounding mass, until the whole is drawn under its preserving influence. It is not here stated that you *ought* to be the lights of the world, as if it were your duty, but that you are so as an indispensable Christian characteristic. In other words, if you are not the light of the world, nor the salt of the earth, the only just conclusion is, that you are not Christians. A Christian shines not because he *will*, but because he is luminous—just because he is light; he does good, not because it is the best policy, or because he will get the greatest credit, or even because he desires to please God or to benefit mankind, but he does good because he cannot help it; it is incident to his renovated nature, it is the response of gratitude to him who is the Lord the Giver.

When a man tries to do good by scheming, or for side ends, or to obtain popularity, or from any perishable motive whatsoever, so far he is not a Christian ; but when he does good because he sees and feels that it is a brother that needs it, a fellow-creature that demands it, that it is his Lord and Master who receives the expression of gratitude when one of his own receives a cup of cold water, then he acts like a priest, and he gives because God has given to him. If then we are the lights of the world, we cannot easily be hid, and we need not therefore plan how to make ourselves seen : we have only to remove obstructions and we must be seen. In fact, the transformation which is made in a Christian's heart by grace is so complete a revolution, that it is utterly impossible it can be hid. Let the lightning strike the lofty spire and level it with the dust, and no trace be left—let it rend the gnarled oak into splinters and yet not a fragment be visible—let health be in the heart and yet create no traces in the countenance—let life be within and yet be no efflux or circulation of life-blood through the system—and then there can be light in the mind, and love in the heart, and peace in the conscience, and no outward manifestation of it visible in the life. When the Gospel unclenches the hand of avarice, levels with the dust the towers of pride, penetrates all places, abashed at no greatness, surprised at no sin, and makes the weakest things monuments of its power, and the most defective things trophies of its grace—it is

impossible, where such a change has taken place, that there should be neither trace, nor sign, nor effect of it visible upon the outward life. What instances have we of this in the word of God? Abraham left Uz of the Chaldees, and went forth not knowing whither he went, and every footprint he has left upon the sands of time is luminous still. Moses "counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and forsook all, not fearing the wrath of the king;" he passed through the world one of its most splendid luminaries, and left a trail of light behind him that shines and illuminates many a pilgrim's journey still. "The noble army of martyrs," "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," "the glorious company of the Apostles" have left similar evidences of their transit through a world of darkness and sin; all reminding us of what the poet has so beautifully said:—

"Lives of good men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behind us,  
Footprints on the sand of time—  
Footprints that perhaps another  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,  
Seeing, may take heart again."

They have left us an example that we should follow them as they followed Christ.

In the next place, the nature of this world renders it impossible that Christian light can be hid. We are placed in a world where character

will come out; where it will be seen and felt what a man is, and whether he has been changed or not. The instant that sin, like the fabled Siren, shall spread her pleasures, her prospects, her allurements, before you, you will throw up this feature, "lover of God rather than lover of pleasure," and so your light will shine forth before men. When ambition arrays before you its powerful patrons, and makes you promises of its rewards if you will fall down and worship, your light will show itself, and "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world," will become luminous in your life, so that you shall present to the world the manifestation, the apocalypse of one "who counts the reproach of Christ greater honour than all the treasures of Egypt." Do you refuse to merge the Christian in the worldling, your conscience, with its solemn obligations, in your convenience with its pretended demands? Do you refuse to sacrifice your principles to prejudice, passion, profit, or pleasure? Would you rather part with your greatest right on earth than let go your least hope in heaven? Would you rather surrender the greatest honour that Cæsar can bestow, than let go the noble dignity of being "the sons of God?" It is only when we show principle triumphing over profit—when we show the majesty of conscience, like a great monarch swaying all that is within us—and giving tone to all that is around us—when we present ourselves as men who are governed by

principles which the world cannot understand, influenced by a light that the world must see — though it do not approve—it is only then that the world feels that our religion is something more than a Sunday dress, or a holiday amusement — that it is what we know it to be, a regenerating element — the will of God not in words only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.

Not only will the *world* thus bring out a Christian character, but the trials and afflictions in which we are all placed, will also do the same. The natural man is in the world, and so is the Christian, the one will buy and sell just as the other, and the one will laugh and weep just as the other does. It is not making a face or putting on a dress, or repeating certain pious expressions, as some men repeat oaths and profane swearing, without attaching any meaning to them, that make a man a Christian or that constitute light: the difference is seen when trials come. The worldling and the Christian walk in the same broad high road for so many miles, but the road at length diverges; principle points one way, profit points another. Here is the place at which it will be seen who is for Christ and who is not. The Christian follows Christ, counting all but loss for him; the worldling follows what he thinks profit, sacrificing all for it. Each trial is a furnace, in which the Christian is placed; the dross only will be consumed, the gold will come out more beautiful than before. It is in trial, affliction, losses, that you will see — and

they are sent of God that you may see—what your Christianity is. Can you say, when all you have gathered is swept away by the hurricane, or has taken wings and fled away, in the terrible chasm there is left behind, “I have still the unsearchable riches of Christ?” When God is pleased to take away the babes he has given you, and to leave you childless, — can you say then and there, as you gaze upon the pale countenance of the dead, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord?” When he takes away the health in which you had gloried, and lays you low on a sick-bed, do you feel it is his doing? Can you lie passive in his hand? can you “let patience have her perfect work,” and, amid all the convulsions of the earth, amid all the storms that shake the world, amid rolling thunders, and amid rocking thrones and heaving earthquakes, can you, as a child of God, resting on the Rock that never can be shaken, and cherishing bright hopes that shall never be disappointed, say to your own heart and to the hearts of others, “Be still, and know that the Lord is God: he will be exalted among the heathen, and he will be exalted in the earth?” Thus then your light will so shine before men, in the world in which you are placed, amid the afflictions with which you may be tried, “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

The state of the world as it now is, will bring out your light. We are very prone to speak of

our country as a Christian land, and its population as a Christian people; without disregarding what is good, or trying to detract from what we must admit to be blessings, it is but too true that Christ's flock to-day, as it was eighteen hundred years ago, is still but a little flock. If the world around us be dark, and if we are conscious that we are light, then this will bring out what we are. If there be millions around us without religion—if there be ragged children running in our streets with no knowledge of God—if there be homes without Bibles, and therefore without happiness—if there be hearts without grace, and therefore without hope—and if these are not on the other side of the Atlantic or of the Pacific, but in our streets, our lanes, our crowded thoroughfares—then, if you have light within, depend upon it that light will exhibit itself, and they that are in darkness and the shadow of death will hail your approach as a light that brightens their path and leads them to the Lamb. It will show itself in your expression of sympathy with them that suffer—in your contributions to the cause of the institutions that would relieve them—in your patronising every movement that is fitted to do good—in your giving a responsive echo to every cry of the orphan—in your ministering to the wants of the widow, and making the world recollect your existence in the midst of it, not as a blank or a bane, but a gigantic blessing, which they knew not till the gleam of the

parting wing reminded them an angel of God was here.

There is no reason in the world why you should not let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. It is one of the strange and almost unexpected facts in the conduct of men, that as long as they have any excellence that the world does or can admire, they will not be ashamed of it, but that things in which they should glory, which are their glory, which they should rejoice to have and to make known, are the very things that they seldom speak of without a blush, and scarcely allude to without some misgiving. This is one of those phenomena which our sinfulness alone accounts for. Did you ever see beauty that was not proud of its charms? or wealth that was not pleased with and proud of its riches? or genius ashamed of its brilliancy? or honour that undervalued its distinctions? or a mother that felt not pleased with her healthy babe? Shall the babe on earth a child of God ashamed of his Father in heaven? a possessor of unsearchable riches anxious to conceal them? a Christian ashamed of Christ? a sinner saved that will not glory in the precious blood by which he was redeemed? a saint weary of proclaiming the excellence of that Gospel which has transformed him? True it is, if you have genius, it will be felt; if rank, it cannot be concealed; if wealth, others will know it; and if you have Christianity, it, too, will be seen and felt; but

in addition to this, you will feel it right to tell others what the Lord has done for your souls, and echo the words of the Psalmist, "Come, all ye that fear God, and I will show you what he has done for my soul." There is nothing, then, in Christianity, or in our character as Christians, that we should be ashamed of. Let the soldier be ashamed of his standard, and the sailor of his Queen, if such a calamity should occur, but let not the Christian be ashamed of Him who is a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. Is there any part of the Bible of which you have reason to be ashamed, or which you have reason to conceal? I know of none. What truth is there in the Bible that you would not wish to be written as letters of light on the sky? What influence is there of the Holy Spirit that you would not wish to burst into bloom in every life, and shine imperishable in every character? Does the Bible say "the wages of sin is death?" Why should we hesitate to say so? Does the Bible say, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God?" Is it not worth telling the world so? Does it say, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Should we be ashamed of such good news? Does it say, "He that believeth hath everlasting life?" Is there any reason upon earth why we should shade such a light? Let the miser cleave to his gold, the infidel to his scepti-

cism, the sensualist to his sins — and all court the night as their congenial season; but we are the children of the day. Light is our element, and love is our atmosphere, and we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; we will “let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.”

One of God’s designs in making us Christians is to make it to be seen, and known, and felt, that we are so. God says of his people, “ye are my witnesses.” Christ is the great light of the world, believers are lights deriving their light from him, and reflecting that light upon the world; and wherever God makes a Christian — and God alone can make one — there, he says, there is a specimen of what Christianity can do. Here is a model, flawed indeed it may be, but still so far a model of the power and influence of the Gospel of Jesus, a specimen of whatsoever things are pure and just, and lovely, and of good report, that judging by the specimen, as men in business do by the sample, you may also go to him who can make you the same.

It is only by such practical illustrations of the power of religion that the world itself, or those that are in it, will be converted. The best credentials of Christianity are Christian men: and when all the arguments that have been employed to defend, and vindicate, and establish it have been exhausted, there is one within the reach of the

humblest and most illiterate, that most impressive argument—a holy and consistent Christian life.

The Church — meaning by that term the company of believers — that sits in a nook and smiles complacently upon the world — that never tries to convince or to convert, but seeks only to enjoy the sunshine of God's countenance for itself, may have outward prosperity, but it has not the approval of God. Whereas that Church which is ready to concede the greatest prejudice, personal, historical, or national, but ready to go as a martyr to the flames rather than compromise the vital and essential truths of living Christianity—the Church that has light in its head, and love in its heart, and holiness in its life, and outflowing influence, will so speak that the world in spite of itself must hear, and so shine that the blindness of the world must see, and the world, still at enmity to God, if it is not convinced and converted by the spectacle, shall raise again the olden cry, “Crucify him, crucify him; away with him, away with him.”

Such a light shining before men will not only have the greatest effect upon the world, but it will make the greatest impression upon the sceptic. As long as the infidel sees that the only difference between him and the people called Christians is this, that they pronounce a certain Shibboleth, and go through certain formalities; go to church on Sunday, and perhaps to the play-house on Monday; and read their Bibles in the morning, and play cards at night: as long as he sees that the

only difference between him and Christians is, that they have certain names, certain phrases, and certain ordinances which he has not, so long he will say, Christianity is not worth having; the change it makes is nothing; I am just as moral and upright as those that make long prayers, and very loud professions. But let him see that lovely light descending into the cellar, and pouring its beams of truth and consolation there; let the sceptic see that solitary beam issuing from that congregation, following that ragged child, and bringing him within the reach of the truth and joy of the Gospel; let him see that light, as in the case of Mrs. Fry, visiting the cell of the prisoner, and dissolving by its touch the chains that bind the soul; let him see that light in all scenes where right is to be vindicated, and wrong-doing to be corrected, and good is to be done, and blessings to be diffused; then the sceptic, who was proof against your external and your internal evidence, and against all the miracles you quoted, will be not only silenced, but satisfied by such evidence, and will say, as one said of old, "This is the finger of God." "Let your light, then, so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It is mainly by such spectacles as these, that Roman Catholics will be enlightened and converted. I believe that the very reason why the principles of Rome, like the person of its Pontiff, are not tumbling from their supremacy, is the defective

tone and character of those that profess to be Protestants. If the poor Roman Catholic understands that it is merely a political quarrel, he will not listen to your arguments; if he supposes that it is only an old family dispute between two sections of the Church, he will turn a deaf ear to your suggestions, and perhaps, if we could suspend all discussion for a while, and exhibit Protestantism in all its sublimity, its power, its transforming excellence and beauty, I believe we should produce a mighty impression. If every Protestant could show himself a man of self-sacrifice, every one trying to spread the Gospel to the utmost, and every missionary labouring, in season and out of season, to bear the message of the Gospel to every man's gate, and the Bible to every man's home, seeking not theirs but them; if we could show to Roman Catholics that the highest holiness can be attained without the aid of indulgences to stimulate, or the terrors of purgatory to frighten; if we could show them that justification by faith is not a theological dogma about which men wrangle, but that it is embosomed in, and followed by, a retinue of the purest graces; then I do believe we should make an impression upon them, such as should never be expunged from the hearts of one of the finest people, by nature, that we know — an impression that the Spirit of God itself would make permanent upon their souls. It is no use to try to expel Popery from the Roman Catholic heart, unless we show something better to supply its place. Never

try to take from a man what he has, unless you can supply him with something better. Make the Roman Catholic cease to be a Roman Catholic, and there is a vacuum ; but the moral, like the physical world, abhors a vacuum ; hence there will rush in seven demons sevenfold more wicked than the first. The way to expel Popery is to press upon it Protestantism, and the way to drive out the evil affection is to introduce the good one. The way to make the deepest impression on the mind of superstition is to add to the eloquence of Paul his benevolent sympathies and Christian love ; and then all parties will see that in preaching from the pulpit our object is not merely to inculcate certain dogmas, but to produce a great moral and spiritual revolution. We have too much theology in our pulpits, we have too little religion in them. We must show that we have theology, not for its own sake, but for the sake of religion. We are especially apt to fancy that an orthodox creed is salvation. It is not so : it may have all the clearness, but if it has also all the coldness of a moonbeam, it is of no use. There is no doubt Judas was orthodox in every article of his faith, knowing what was truth, and teaching and advocating it. But to have head without heart is not to have the salvation of the soul. Be not satisfied with your Christian convictions, till you have felt them in your hearts, seen them shining from your life, and heard the responsive recognition of them from those to whom they have been blessed.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” In adding a few more explanatory remarks to those I have already made, let me say, be sure first of all that you are lights, and then you may be sure that you will be luminous. I believe it is not so much our direct and aggressive efforts to do good, as the silent and unconscious influence of Christian character, that produces the greatest effects. It is what a man *is*, not what he *says*, that tells the most. Better be a very poor preacher than a very poor liver. Better preach by the holiness of your life, than draw crowds by the most splendid and impressive eloquence. *Be*, and not *seem*; be better than you seem, rather than seem better than you are. A holy life is a silent hymn; a life of self-sacrifice is a continual sermon; and he whose sermons have a commentary in his life is the man whom God has ordained and consecrated, and whom no Pope or prelate can excommunicate. To show the importance of this prescription, read again the biography of him of whom it was said, “Never man spake like this man,” and of whom it might be added, as it is implied, “Never man lived like this man.” What was it in the character and conduct of Jesus that made the greatest impression? We read that, wonderful as were his words, untiring as was his beneficence, mighty as were his miracles, it was his consistent, beautiful and benevolent character that told upon the world, made his enemies fall to the

ground before him, and his own cluster around, and love and worship him. Jesus made so deep an impression on the age through which he passed, less by what he said, and more by what he was. He thus lived as the example, that we should follow in his footsteps. His speech, his miracles, his deeds, his travails were intended not to lead you to them, as if these were the ultimate thing, but to be pioneers to lead you to Jesus, and see in him God manifest in the flesh.

In the next place, it is not only important that the minister, like his Master, should *be*, and not *seem*, but it is also very important that the audience should be so too. When a minister preaches to an audience, three-fourths or nine-tenths of whom are worldly, thoughtless men, who are come merely to see if they can scent any pretty flower in the sermon, or hear any well-turned sentence, not hungering after living bread, or thirsting for living water, it is a discouragement to him; but when he is convinced that half the congregation are living, Christian men, lights lighted from Christ, the fountain of light, then he preaches from the pulpit with more power, and tells upon the unconverted with greater effect. When sermons are cold, it is very often because the atmosphere in which they are preached is cold. And when there is eloquence, or force, or power in a sermon, the reason lies often not in the genius of the preacher, but in the kindling and electric air in which he speaks. Were our soldiers and our sailors to go forth to distant

shores the lights of the world, letting their "light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorify the Father which is in heaven," what blessed auxiliaries would they be to the missionaries of the Church of Christ! Were those countless emigrants who are daily leaving our shores (and in some parts of the empire they are the best and the holiest who do leave) universally the lights of the world, letting their "light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven," it would be no more said that our emigrant population are like the locusts of Egypt, finding the world a garden before, and leaving a wilderness behind them; but they would be lights of the world, spreading kindling rays wherever they go, the ambassadors of God, and the benefactors of mankind. It is thus that I am reminded how much good the poorest Christian can do. Do not let those who cannot give excuse themselves from duty, on the plea that they cannot be missionaries. I speak to those who cannot give, and say they may exercise the office of missionaries in the chambers of the sick; while you mingle the medicine that is prescribed, may you not whisper some short, simple, consolatory text? May not each man in his vocation and ministry, say or do something that will let forth rays of light, which will reveal, in him and by him, the goodness, power and beauty of the everlasting Gospel?

## APPENDIX



### I.

[*The following extract is from a masterly work of Dr. M'Neile, "The Church and the Churches," a work that is worthy of universal study.*]

THIS will lead to a more direct consideration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

- I. In its original institution.
- II. In its continuance in the Churches.
- III. In what is essential to its celebration.
- IV. In the true spiritual nature of it.

I. The divine institution of the Lord's Supper is contained in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. As they were eating, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (St. Luke xxii. 19; St. Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.)

This is express and complete, so far as the disciples to whom Jesus addressed himself were concerned. It became obviously and undeniably their duty to observe this ordinance, as commanded by their Lord and Master. But this, of itself, would not prove that the ordinance was to be *continued* in the Church after those first disciples had fallen asleep. Some of the things which the Lord commanded them were not to be continued.

For example, when sending the twelve forth to preach, he commanded them, saying, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." (St. Matt. x. 9, 10.) From these words it became their plain duty to go forth without any of the ordinary means of support; but it does not follow that all who have succeeded them in the ministry of the Word shall go forth in like manner. And doubtless had the Scriptures contained nothing more upon the subject of the Lord's Supper than the commandment of Jesus to the twelve disciples, a similar line of argument might fairly be applied to invalidate the *continuance* of that ordinance in the churches.

II. But it has pleased God to place this matter beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, and to give us as express an authority for the continuance, as for the original institution of the Lord's Supper. St. Paul was not one of the disciples to whom Jesus gave the commandment. At that time he was not a disciple at all, but an opposer and persecutor. Afterwards, when he was called to be an Apostle, and sent forth to preach to the Gentiles; to guard, it would seem, against any mistake upon this point, the Lord gave him special instructions similar to his original commandment addressed to the twelve. Of this he thus informs us: "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. xi. 23—25.) And to prevent any subsequent mistake as to the continuance of the ordinance, the Apostle was instructed to declare that it was of uninterrupted divine obligation, until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death *till he come.*" (Verse 26.) The former part of this pas-

sage extends the institution to us Gentiles; and the latter part binds it upon us and our children, *till the Lord comes*.

III. The right celebration of the Lord's Supper includes an actual and literal use of bread and wine. This would seem to follow from the language of the institution itself, "eat," "drink." But this alone would not be conclusive; because such language is, as we have seen, frequently used figuratively, to signify spiritual communion: but here again we are supplied, by the facts of the case, with most conclusive proof, that in the celebration of this ordinance, under apostolical authority, there was the actual use of bread and wine. The members of the primitive Corinthian church were guilty of a carnal abuse of this sacred ordinance. St. Paul reproves them for it, charging them with such reckless and selfish eating and drinking, that while some of the brethren were left without anything, others were surfeited even to drunkenness. His words are, "One is hungry and another is drunken." It is obvious, therefore, that they had actual eating and drinking. (I may add, in passing, that it is equally obvious that what they drank was actually intoxicating wine.) And the Apostle, while directly correcting their abuse of the practice, indirectly stamps the practice itself with his inspired authority. Here was an opportunity afforded of putting a stop to the practice of using literal wine, had such practice been an error. But instead of putting a stop to it, the Apostle plainly sanctions it, provided it were done decently and in order. It follows from this, that whatever views of spiritual truth may be entertained, and whatever spiritual feelings may be experienced, no person, or society of persons, refusing to use, in this ordinance, literal bread and wine, can be living in obedience to our Lord's commandment. And it follows also that the lay members of the church partook of wine as well as bread; otherwise no opportunity could have arisen for *such* an abuse, or the use of such language.

Again; the right celebration of this ordinance involves an acknowledgment of the doctrine of atonement, *i. e.* pardon of sin, through the meritorious substitution of an appointed sacrifice. This was plainly declared by our Lord in the institution of it. "This is my blood which is shed for many *for the*

*remission of sins."* This direct connexion between the shedding of Christ's blood and the forgiveness of our sins, is the fundamental truth: without which it is worse than a perversion of language to admit that there is, or can be, any Christianity at all. None who reject this truth can be living in obedience to the Lord's commandment in this ordinance.

But the right celebration of this ordinance does *not* include any specific and uniform mode of administration; whether as to the words we use, or the postures we adopt, or the frequency of our observance, or the quantity we eat and drink. The words with which Christ himself blessed the bread, or gave thanks, are not recorded, neither are the words of the Apostles.

All such details are left to the discretion of the members of the Church in different ages and countries; and may be arranged and altered at discretion, provided always that nothing be enjoined contrary to God's word written, and nothing practised indecent or disorderly, frivolous or absurd.

It is of much consequence thus to distinguish between what is essential to the ordinance as of divine institution, and what is adventitious as of human arrangement. If there be no bread used, or no wine, or if there be no confession of the great doctrine of atonement, the ordinance is vitiated. The Lord's Supper, as the Lord appointed it, is not observed. But it may be observed where there is no Liturgy, no prescribed form of consecration, no rubrical directions concerning the postures of the minister, the position or description of the table, or the time and manner of placing the bread and wine upon it.

On all such matters it is lawful for any national or particular Church to adopt any such arrangements as shall be deemed expedient for decency and order; and when they are adopted, it is not lawful for any private member of such Church to violate them. But it is lawful for any other national or particular church to adopt other different arrangements, (provided always that nothing be enjoined contrary to God's word written,) and it is schismatical tyranny in any one Church to impose her own arrangements (as necessary to salvation) upon another; or to deny the true and saving Christianity of other Churches,

because they prefer their own arrangements, and refuse to adopt hers.

We are confirmed in this judgment by the difference between the instructions given by inspiration of God in the Jewish ordinances and in the Christian.

In Judæism, uniformity in detail was necessary for the completeness and integrity of the type, therefore every garment and every movement of the sacrificing priest was specified in the divine institution: but now the great Anti-type is come, the one sacrifice once, and once for all, offered, and the true ever-living Priest entered into heaven itself; now, the conformity required is reduced to the simplest elements, and no details of administration, whether of dress or posture, whether of minister or people, are specified. We now consider

#### IV. The true spiritual nature of the Lord's Supper.

This may, I think, be perfectly and clearly considered under five heads.

(1.) It is a commemoration of an absent friend. The friend is Jesus Christ. Where is he now? I do not ask this with reference to his Godhead; in this respect he is everywhere essentially omnipresent, "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead." But his manhood, and especially the visible part of it, his body, which was born of the Virgin Mary, which hungered, thirsted, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again the third day; his body concerning which, after it was risen, he said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (St. Luke xxiv. 39.) So considered, where is he? The answer is, "In heaven." He went away into heaven, and will come again in like manner as he went. (Acts i. 11.) Before he departed he appointed this memorial of himself to be observed by his friends during his absence. "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do *in remembrance of me*. Likewise also the cup after supper," &c. Thus, this was to be done in remembrance of him, until he should return again, when of course this memorial, intended for his absence, would cease.

This seems fairly to conclude against his bodily presence in

the ordinance. Remembrance refers to a transaction past, or an individual absent, and not to anything present. Of course he was present when he first desired them to do it, and showed them what to do ; but he did not so desire them, till he was on the point of leaving them ; and his commandment to continue the practice had obvious and natural reference to his approaching absence. If he intended this eating and drinking to be done by his Church in his presence, he used a word calculated to mislead when he said, do this in *remembrance* of me. If at the words of consecration he comes, then the time is arrived for discontinuing this ordinance, for it is instituted only *till* he comes.

(2.) It is a confession of faith.

As often, however frequently or rarely it may be, as we obey this commandment of the Lord, eating this bread and drinking this cup, we do "*shew* the Lord's death till he comes." By an outward and visible action, which may be seen and known of all around us, we point to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of our hope in the day of Judgment, when he shall come in his glory. We confess him, not only in our own hearts in secret before his all-searching eye, but openly also "before men." Such an open acknowledgment of him now during his absence, and while the world is rejecting him, he expressly requires from his Church, and connects it with a corresponding acknowledgment of her upon his return. "Who-soever shall confess me *before men*, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." (St. Luke xii. 8.) To receive the Lord's Supper is to *shew* our faith in the Lord's death ; it is a public declaration that we renounce every other way, or supposed way, of salvation, and cleave only unto Him.

(3.) It is a vow of devoted service.

It is from this that it derived the name of sacrament. *Sacramentum* signifies an oath. It was commonly used to express the obligation under which Roman soldiers bound themselves unto death, when they entered the army. And because the members of Christ's Church did in baptism make, and at the Lord's Supper repeat, a solemn oath or vow to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants until their lives' end ; those ordi-

nances came to be called, in the Latin churches, sacramenta, or sacraments. This is the simple and intelligible origin of this much-abused word, which has been made, in the imagination of theologians, to signify what it never signified in any language. The meanings ascribed to it are so entirely arbitrary, and so utterly wide of the literal signification of the word itself, that in the disputations which have arisen about them, there is no common standard to refer to, and of course controversy is interminable.

If the word occurred in the Scriptures, the case would be wholly different; for then, every Christian society would be equally bound to investigate, and if possible to ascertain, the sense in which the sacred writer used it, and to receive that sense as a common standard: but the word now under consideration, though in such incessant use among ecclesiastical controversialists, *never once occurs in the inspired volume*. It is for this reason, that in my endeavours to avoid ambiguity, I have refrained as far as possible from the use of this shibboleth, and adopted the expression which is sanctioned by apostolic usage, *the Lord's Supper*. (1 Cor. xi. 20.)

The open celebration of this ordinance might well be considered a solemn vow, pledge, or oath of allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied as it was by exposure to imminent danger. The stream of authority ran against the infant Church, even to violent persecution. Great was the temptation, therefore, by which converts were exercised, to conceal their convictions within their own bosoms, or at farthest within the circle of their faithful and already converted friends; if by so doing they might have the saving benefits of the Christian religion, without incurring the present perils of the Christian Church. Participation in the Lord's Supper was incompatible with such concealment; because it was an overt act, open to the inspection of any spy, and easy of proof before the magistrates.

It was, therefore, not only a profession of faith, but a profession under such circumstances as invested it with the character of a solemn enlistment by men who had counted the

cost, and come to the determination not to esteem their lives dear to themselves in comparison with the high duty and everlasting blessedness of serving the Lord Christ.

(4.) It is a spiritual feeding upon the truth.

Truth is to a man's soul what food is to his body. If the body be healthful, food is enjoyed, and ministers growth: it gives great pleasure in the taking, and strength when taken. If the soul be healthful, truth is in like manner attended with gratification and production of strength and growth. Jesus Christ is "the truth." Jesus Christ is "God manifest in the flesh." *The flesh of Christ, i. e. his body and blood, express comprehensively all revealed truth.* To feed on truth, is to eat and drink Christ: to eat his body, and drink his blood. If any man feed not on the truth, if he enjoy it not, tasting that the Lord is good; (Ps. xxxiv. 8;) if he eat not the body of Christ, and drink not his blood, he has no true spiritual life in him. (St. John vi. 53.)

The Lord's Supper expresses this, not by words only, but also by material things. Our sense of taste is appealed to, as well as our mental or spiritual perceptions. Religion is not a science, but a life. Truth is not a lesson to be learned in the intellect, but an incorporation including the whole man, the sentient, the animal parts, as well as the intellectual. It is union with Christ. He dwells in our hearts by faith, (Ephes. iii. 17,) and we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Ib. v. 30.)

Of this the Lord's Supper is the outward and visible expression: valuable, highly so, as all means are which the Lord has appointed, but valuable only as means for the attainment of the higher end in view. This accounts, and I think very satisfactorily, for the fact, that the Lord's Supper is so rarely mentioned in the history or writings of the Apostles. They were so engrossed in thinking and feeling, and speaking, and writing about the great end, that they seldom dwell upon the details of the means. If we except the passing mention made of "breaking of bread," in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, (and the application of that to the Lord's Supper is doubtful,) the subject of the Lord's Supper is not so much

as alluded to in the entire narrative. In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, there is no mention of or allusion to it. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, there is no allusion to it. In his Epistles to the Churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica, we do not meet with the slightest allusion to it. In his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, where some instruction upon the subject might have been expected, there is no allusion to it. The same is true of his Epistle to Philemon, and I think also of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The only clause in this Epistle that can be mistaken for an allusion (and that a remote and obscure one,) to the Lord's Supper, is chap. xiii. 10, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." This appears to me to be a general contrast between Christianity and Judæism, expressing the impossibility of practically combining them, but without any special reference to the Lord's Supper. In this opinion I am not singular.

In the Epistle general of St. James, there is no allusion to it. In the two Epistles of St. Peter, no allusion to it. In the three Epistles of St. John, no allusion to it. In the Epistle of St. Jude, no allusion to it!

The reader will notice that this is not a matter of opinion, liable to error and open to correction, but a plain matter of fact; and certainly, if it be a primary duty (as without doubt it is) to give diligent heed to the truth as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and not only so, but also to the scriptural *proportions* in which it is pressed upon the Church; there is much and important instruction in the facts here stated. In all the apostolical writings subsequent to the institution of the Lord's Supper, that ordinance is plainly mentioned only in one Epistle; and in that Epistle, only twice: once as a passing illustration of another subject, and once for the correction of certain practical abuses which had crept into the mode of its observance.

This fact does not in any way disparage the ordinance itself. The Apostles would not of course have adopted any line of procedure justly liable to such a reproach. One plain commandment from their Lord was abundantly sufficient to

ensure their dutiful obedience. I speak here of *proportions* in the teaching of the Apostles, whether they were preaching to the heathen, or writing to the saints. They used all appointed means, but they did not treat means as if they were ends; or as if they could of themselves, or by any inherent virtue lodged in them and inseparable from them, secure the ends desired. If the Apostles believed, as the truth of God, what many claiming to be their successors have advanced upon the subject; they have certainly manifested a remarkable unanimity in concealing their real sentiments. Supposing Peter and John to have held the Roman — or Tractarian — view of “the Holy Eucharist:” their catholic epistles may be cited as the most complete specimens of *reserve* which have ever been published. In those epistles, the sacred writers enlarge, with eager animation, on evangelical doctrine, but make no mention whatever, directly or indirectly, of the Lord’s Supper considered as an outward ordinance.

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## II.

FROM THE LARGER CATECHISM OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

*Q. 168. What is the Lord’s Supper?*

*A.* The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

*Q. 169. How hath Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper?*

A. Christ hath appointed the ministers of his word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants, who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.

*Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?*

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

*Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before coming unto it?*

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

*Q. 172. May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?*

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be

found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved: and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

*Q. 173. May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it?*

*A.* Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from the sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in the Church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

*Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?*

*A.* It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

*Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

*A.* The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their

own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence.

*Q. 176. Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree?*

*A.* The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the Gospel, and by none other, and to be continued in the Church of Christ until his second coming.

*Q. 177. Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?*

*A.* The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

THE END.

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
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